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WEEKEND joins the pack

VERSACE AT THE MET

MAGAZINE

Doorsteps to be swept away by new building rules

By Rachel Kelly
PROPERTY CORRESPONDENT

THE great British front doorstep is to vanish under the red tape of regulations. Beloved of sitcoms, scrubbed by generations of housewives, and a staple of urban architecture, the doorstep is set to disappear under changes to housebuilding regulations to be announced before Christmas.

Under the new rules, Nick Raynsford, the Construction Minister, will declare "level thresholds" mandatory on all new homes to ensure access for people in wheelchairs.

Existing buildings will not be affected.

The 150,000 new homes built annually will in future also have to have a downstairs lavatory accessible to the disabled, wider internal and external doors and corridors, and less steep footpaths and approaches. Public buildings, shops and offices already have to provide level thresholds.

The changes are the culmination of a decade of lobbying by organisations representing disabled and elderly people.

Roger Humber, the chief executive of the House Builders' Federation, said: "This will change the face of domestic architecture. It will require a major redesign of the fronts of most of the houses we build."

Richard Best, of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the housing charity, said: "These will be important measures, not just for the six million people who are disabled in some way, but for all of us who will benefit."

The regulations are likely to be implemented by April 1999. Builders will be required to make the front door, or a side door if there is one, level with the path or driveway.

The only exemptions will be for houses built on steep slopes, where steps are unavoidable.

Detached or semi-detached homes could put the level threshold at the rear of the property provided it was easily accessible from where a car would be parked.

External doors will probably be a minimum of 800mm wide, and internal doors 750mm wide. The main downstairs corridor is expected to be a minimum of 900mm and the downstairs lavatory entrance must be 750mm wide.

What builders must ensure — in the jargon of the industry — is "visi-

ability housing" for those in wheelchairs.

The ideas were first suggested by the concept of a "Lifetime Home" — one that would last from cradle to grave — developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Its report suggested 16 changes that the average home would have to undergo to qualify, including more far-reaching changes than the Government proposes.

The House Builders' Federation said that the changes could add £1,000 to the cost of the average two-bedroom house and would squeeze many first-time buyers out of the

market. "Builders will simply stop making two-bedroom houses and make three-bedroom ones instead," Mr Humber said. "And we don't have failsafe technical solutions at the moment to ensure that we keep the rain out."

The foundation said the changes would add only £200 to the cost of building a three-bedroom house. The Department of the Environment refused to confirm the changes but said that an announcement would be made in the House of Commons shortly.

Doorstep history, page 5

Help planned for farms hit by beef ban

By Philip Webster
and Michael Hornsby

AN EMERGENCY package of help for the livestock industry is being considered by the Government against a background of spreading protests by British farmers angry at the impact of cheap beef imports on their crisis-ridden industry.

As farmers blockading British ports were told last night that they were not above the law, the Cabinet also decided to set up a far-reaching inquiry into the origins and conduct of the BSE crisis as part of its efforts to restore confidence in British beef.

Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, issued a warning that the protests against cheap Irish beef imports were damaging the farmers' own interests and threatening Britain's close relationship with Ireland. He spoke as farmers were preparing to march on Dover and Folkestone in an extension of the campaign of port blockades that began in Holyhead and Fishguard in Wales and later spread to Seaford in Merseyside and Stranraer in south-west Scotland.

The dispute's escalation came as the Government's decision to ban within weeks the sale of beef on the bone sparked a wave of last-minute "panic-buying" from customers keen to stock up on ribs of beef, T-bone steaks and ox-tails. Ministers rejected accusations that they had overreacted to the latest scientific advice, which shows BSE had been detected in bone marrow. And Downing Street confirmed that a BSE inquiry stretching well back into the 1980s will be established before Christmas.

The investigation, expected to be headed by a judge, will



Cunningham: farmers warned on blockades

summon all the key figures involved, including the former Conservative ministers Stephen Dorrell and Douglas Hogg, and possibly the former Prime Minister, John Major. "We have long acknowledged that this issue is so serious, there must be some form of inquiry," the Prime Minister's press spokesman said.

It will also cover Dr Cunningham's latest decision — to ban the sale of beef on the bone — which sparked confusion yesterday over when it would take effect. Ministers are required by law to consult and then to lay an order before Parliament. Estimates as to how long that would take varied all day, with some officials suggesting it would be the new year before the ban could operate. However, by last night senior officials voiced the hope that it could be in place the week after next.

The Cabinet spent much of its meeting yesterday discussing the crisis. Afterwards, in the Commons, the minister said that the Government was considering "whether and how we can provide extra assistance... when I can make an announcement about that decision I will."

Ministers are believed to be considering extra help for the beef sector from within the agriculture budget, possibly by switching assistance that goes to the dairy industry. The money will be supplemented

by compensation from European Union funds.

Dr Cunningham emerged from a London meeting with Joe Walsh, his Irish counterpart, to pledge to do everything in his power to bring the chaos to a halt. "Farmers have no right to act outside the law. If this was a bunch of unemployed youngsters people would see it completely differently," he said.

The minister said that the protesters were "short-sighted" if they could not see the damage they were doing to Britain's reputation. "When French lorry drivers were blockading French ports farmers here were the first to complain, rightly so, that their interests were being affected," he said. Dr Cunningham added that his discussion with Mr Walsh had been "cordial but nevertheless frank. Joe has left me in no doubt about the strength of feeling in the Republic of Ireland about the illegal blockading of legitimate trade."

The Road Haulage Association called on port authorities to ensure all docks were kept open as farmers threatened round-the-clock pickets. "What started as a minor dispute is in danger of spiralling out of control, with no rule dictating who can and cannot transit to and from the UK," a spokesman said. "The British economy cannot be held to ransom."

Militant Welsh farmers were last night maintaining a round-the-clock protest at Holyhead, while others mounted a blockade of Fishguard. More than 500 farmers from Southern England were expected to gather at Dover's eastern docks.

News of the BSE inquiry was welcomed by MPs and relatives of CJD victims. Charles Kennedy, agriculture spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, hoped it would be "comprehensive, independent and public."

Shoppers rush, page 4



Clive Harold and the Prince at The Big Issue headquarters. The magazine seller said: "I only remember him because we both had big ears"

Prince and the pauper, old boys reunited

By Daniel McGroarty
and Adam Fresco

THE PRINCE OF WALES clearly did not recognise the middle-aged man sitting next to him, whom he thought was about to explain what it is like to make a living by selling *The Big Issue*, the magazine for the homeless.

But self-confessed alcoholic and pauper Clive Harold stunned the Prince when he said: "Actually we were at school together."

The Prince stared at Mr Harold's lined and gaunt face. "Really, where and when?" he asked, turning his back on three other homeless vendors who looked similarly startled by the revelation.

The 49-year-old former journalist and author, who has been selling the magazine outside Holborn Underground station in London for only a week, said he remembered the Prince from their days at the Hill House prep school in Chelsea from the late Fifties. In those days, Mr Harold recalled, all he shared with the Prince was that both were teased for their prominent ears.

The pair then swapped reminiscences about having to walk "crocodile style, in single

file" through Sloane Square on their way to a Terrestrial Army ground to play football and how a teacher would try to raise their spirits by giving them sweets.

"It was acid drops" the Prince said, punching his old schoolfriend's arm. "No, they were strong mints," Mr Harold said. "We were in the same stream for about two years."

Afterwards, Mr Harold said: "The Prince did not remember me of course and I only remember him because we both had big ears and

because he was obviously well known there."

He had told the Prince, who was visiting the London headquarters of *The Big Issue*, that selling the magazine had brought discipline back into his life. "It gives people a purpose."

The Prince replied: "As long as you're all right, that's the main thing." As they parted, the Prince clapped him on the back and said: "Well done."

Wrapped up in his black greatcoat over a leather jacket Mr Harold produced his Father Christmas hat, which he wears to sell the magazine, and offered it to the Prince, who declined with as much grace as he could muster.

Mr Harold said later: "When I was five I lived in a mansion. My father was well-known and had lots of influential friends."

"It is a long time ago and I cannot really remember if I was very friendly with the Prince. I said: 'This is a bit like *The Goon Show*'. Things went wrong with my life. I told him: 'I have made a few mistakes'."

"After leaving Hill House, I told him I went on to Millfield public school while he went to Gordonstoun."

"After college, I became a journalist and was writing

showbiz pages on *Woman's Own* and other women's magazines. I wrote a book called *The Uninvited*, which went to number eight in the best-seller lists. I still carry a copy of it around with me. It is a sort of security blanket. Everything

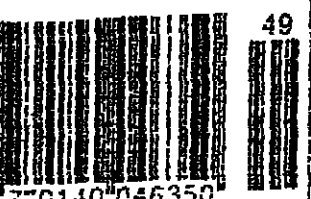
was going so well in my career. I was speaking with stars like Sylvester Stallone and I went to New York and Hollywood."

"I sold the film rights to my book in Hollywood but nothing. Continued on page 3, col 6

Christmas Opening Hours
Monday to Friday 9.30am to 6.00pm
Saturday 10.00am to 6.00pm Sunday 12.00 to 5.00pm

TV & RADIO	54.55
WEATHER	28
CROSSWORDS	28.56
LETTERS	25
OBITUARIES	27
MATTHEW PARRIS	24
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England get Romania in World Cup

ENGLAND are in one of the easier pools after last night's 1998 World Cup draw in Marseille. They meet the seeded Romania, and Tunisia and Colombia, with the top two qualifying for the knock-out stage (John Goodbody writes).

Scotland have to play Brazil, four times winners of the 32-nation tournament, in the opening match in Paris on June 10. They also meet Morocco and Norway.

Glenn Hoddle, England's coach, said: "The draw could have been a lot worse but it also could have been a bit easier. All in all we are not too disappointed."

The draw, pages 50, 51, 54

Right Hons to join queue

By Polly Newton, Political Reporter

FORMER Cabinet ministers, forced to accept life without the trappings of power, are facing another cruel blow. After saying goodbye to their drivers, their red boxes and a hefty portion of their salaries, they are threatened with the loss of their traditional precedence in Commons debates.

A committee of MPs is set to recommend that members of the Privy Council — who are entitled to call themselves Right Honourable — should no longer be allowed to speak ahead of their colleagues.

That would leave backbench political heavyweights such as Michael Heseltine, Kenneth Clarke and even Sir Edward Heath having to wait their turn alongside relative unknowns from the 1997 Tory intake. The

prospect is even more alarming for Labour Privy Counsellors such as Tony Benn and Gerald Kaufman, who would find themselves competing on equal terms with the swollen ranks of their party's backbenchers.

However, it will delight the vast majority of MPs, who are outside the Privy Council and are therefore known as merely "Honourable Members". Many have sat for hours in the chamber with contributions prepared, watching the clock tick by as the time allocated for a debate is eaten up by one ex-officio holder after another.

All current and former Cabinet ministers are life members of the Privy Council, which was created more than 500 years ago to advise the sovereign but has now lost

most of its functions to government departments.

Membership, seen as an honour and demands little in the way of duties from most of those who belong, is also bestowed on some senior Ministers of State. Backbenchers with a distinguished record who have never been ministers may be appointed Privy Counsellors, but only rarely.

The recommendation is expected to come from the Commons modernisation committee in the new year. It has found support among both Conservative and Labour members of the committee as well as from the Liberal Democrats, but would have to be put to a vote of the whole House.

Parliament, pages 14 & 15

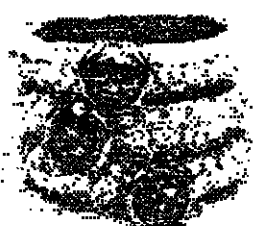
Halifax raises the cost of mortgages

THE Halifax yesterday delivered a bitter pre-Christmas blow to its 2.5 million borrowers, raising its mortgage rate from 8.45 to 8.7 per cent (Janet Bush writes).

The news meant that relief after the Bank of England's decision earlier in the day to leave base rates unchanged was short-lived. The Halifax said its move was a response to the Bank's increase last month.

A Halifax customer with an average £60,000 variable rate mortgage will pay almost £12 more a month. But borrowers whose payments are recalculated annually will pay as much as £100 more a month from April.

Rate lifted, page 29



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Herd instinct drives new farm labourers to seek fresh pastures

Lawrence Quinn, MP, represents Scarborough and Whitby. As you would expect in a Member from a North Yorkshire seat, he is worried about the livelihoods of farmers. "Farmers in my constituency," he began, explaining anxieties to Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister. "Nothing odd there."

No, what makes us blink is that Mr Quinn is a Labour MP. Not for 30 years has it been common for a farming constituency to return a Labour Member, but it is now. To

hear the axe-faced Gordon Prentice (Labour, Pendle), who looks and sounds like a Marxist polytechnic lecturer weaned on class war, recite figures for net incomes on hill land is disorientating. Representing farmers has the same effect on a Labour politician as on a Conservative or Liberal Democrat. The MP falls prey to a sort of incontinence in expression of woe. Every problem is catastrophic, all sunshine drought, every shower a flood. At National Farmers' Union meetings in my constituency,

I used to smile at the irony: hardened, wind-tanned, frost-bitten sons of the soil — models, surely, of stoical understatement? — seem to flap at every breeze. Their urban cousins bite the lip. While I was an MP, ship-building in the North East was virtually wiped out while communities found their lives destroyed, their future blanked. Around the same time, a Common Market milk quota scheme was brought in, regularising and in some cases limiting the quantity of milk the Milk



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Marketing Board would buy from each dairy farmer. This affected some farm incomes. The volume of noise from the farms vastly exceeded that from the shipyards. Gnashing of teeth, wild prophecies, threats and imprecations, almost drowned out the dignified expressions of despair from the shipworkers. Rural market

towns generated more fuss in a month than the whole of Newcastle upon Tyne in a decade. Perhaps we should not have been surprised. European Agriculture is the last sector of industry still run on Communist principles, and (along with other parts of the public sector, such as doctors and dons) farmers have learned

from long experience of total dependency upon politicians for their incomes. So it becomes necessary for observers to pass these outpourings of unbridled alarm through a verbal filter, scaling each adjective down about seven pegs on the rack of human suffering. Jack Cunningham is well qualified to apply the filter. Languid, quick-minded, poised, articulate and cool, he is one of this Cabinet's surprise stars. To hear Dr Cunningham say "dorsal root ganglia" is one of the uncer-

pered pleasures of 1997. He will have needed his adjective filter yesterday. It wasn't just the Labour MPs who were upset. John Greenway (C, Ryedale) called this "an unprecedented crisis". Farmers had "never been so angry". James Gray (C, N Wilt) said farmers were close to desperation. To Tom King (C, Bridgwater) the farmers' plight was the worst in a quarter century. Nicholas Winterton (C, Macclesfield) said it was the worst for 15 years. David Prior (C, N

Norfolk) thought the scale of their problems exceeded by nothing but the arrogance of ministers. Even the rational David Curry (C, Skipton & Rippon) described exports as "dropping like a stone". The Liberal Democrat Paul Tyler (Cornwall N), whose authority is such that these days he is heard almost as Principal Opposition Spokesman, called ministers to action. Join me, reader, in scaling down this language to appropriate. You should still conclude that farmers are in serious trouble.

Prisoners lose freedom to talk to journalists

By FRANCES GIBBS
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

FRESH curbs on the freedom of prisoners to talk to journalists were imposed by the Court of Appeal yesterday when it rejected a ruling that such curbs were in breach of their right to free speech.

In a judgment which deals a blow to investigative journalism, Lord Justice Kennedy said: "The loss of that 'right' if it can properly be so described, is part and parcel of a sentence of imprisonment."

He can no longer go where he wishes. He is confined. He can no longer speak to those outside prison or receive visits from anyone other than his lawyer and his relatives and friends.

The judgment reverses the ruling of December 1996 won

by two prisoners who are serving life sentences for murders they say they never committed. Ian Simms, convicted at Liverpool Crown Court in 1989 of the murder of Helen McCourt, was being visited at Full Sutton jail by a journalist, Bob Woffinden, who wrote articles about his concern that he had been wrongly convicted.

Michael O'Brien, convicted at Cardiff Crown Court in 1988 of murder and robbery, contacted Karen Voisey of BBC Wales, who visited him at Long Lartin jail in 1995. The prison authorities said the journalists must sign an undertaking that any material obtained would not be used for professional purposes. When each refused to sign, further visits were not allowed.

Mr Justice Latham, a High

Court judge, found in favour of the prisoners last year, saying that the law demanded that the civil rights of an inmate should suffer only minimum interference. He said the restriction on communication with the media was "a restriction on the right of free speech".

Mr Woffinden, who has produced documentaries for Yorkshire TV and is author of *Hanratty — the Final Verdict*, said the ruling placed "a very unfair restriction on prisoners and an absurd restriction on journalists. Miscarriages of justice will continue, and it will not be satisfactory for prisoners to converse in writing because they are often reluctant to put down all the details on paper."

Adrian Clarke, solicitor for the prisoners, said an appeal to the House of Lords was likely. He said that the restriction could create a situation where wrongful convictions such as that of David Evans — the man released after serving 25 years for murder this week — would be hard to correct.

Paul Cavadino, principal officer for the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, said: "Unless a journalist has abused visits, it cannot be right to bar them from visiting a prisoner and using information in the course of serious journalism about the criminal justice and penal process."



Tessa Jowell with Bernard Kouchner, the French Health Minister, yesterday

Tobacco ban under a cloud

From CHARLES BRENNER
IN BRUSSELS

THE prospects of an EU-wide ban on tobacco advertising hung in the balance last night as states wrangled over a compromise that would give

Britain an eight-year breathing space for the sponsorship of Formula One motor racing. The EU's complex voting arrangements meant that even if Britain's demands were met, the EU's eight-year-long campaign to outlaw all forms of tobacco advertising could collapse because of opposition from a minority led by Germany.

After a day of negotiation that featured a surprise move against Britain by Spain, Tessa Jowell, the Health Minister, was holding out for a nine-year exemption for wearing sport of tobacco money. The period was deemed too long by Italy, Greece, Belgium and Finland. Pleading for time, Mrs Jowell pointed out that motor racing depended on \$100 million of tobacco sponsorship per year. A majority of states backed a compromise, presented by Luxembourg, holder of the EU presidency, that offered a

temporary exemption of eight years for the tobacco sponsorship of recognised world "events", which could include Formula One.

Hope for a quick compromise collapsed early yesterday when Jose-Manuel Roman, the Spanish minister, upset the voting equation by abandoning Madrid's support for the advertising ban. "For political reasons," he said, Spain could not tolerate a special case being crafted to suit British desires while Germany's would be overridden by a majority vote for the ban.

Under the draft, member states would have two years to ban media and public advertising, plus two years to phase out tobacco sponsorship. Governments would be allowed to designate special cases for a further four-year exemption provided these were events of international significance that already received tobacco money.

The day Blair's sister-in-law tried to pick up Alan Clark

By A CORRESPONDENT

THE Prime Minister's sister-in-law Lauren Booth has described how she tried to date the "cold, steely-eyed Lothario" Alan Clark, the Tory MP and former Cabinet Minister. But after making the attempt, she said she felt like a child who had foolishly poked a stick at a caged panther, Ms Booth, 28, says in *The Spectator* magazine.

The former model recalled how she tried to date Mr Clark at the recent *Spectator* parliamentary awards ceremony. "My reputation as a Valkyrie-like goddess (encouraged by bored journalists with columns to fill) was at stake as I met that cold, steely-eyed Lothario, Alan Clark," she wrote. "To leave the awards not having been asked out by him would, I was assured, be seen as a sure sign you're a woker."

Determinedly, I walked over to him and, smiling as demurely as I dared, announced: "It wouldn't be good form for either of us to leave here without having arranged an innocent lunch together."

"Time may indeed have crumpled those aquiline features, but as he turned his full and vaguely amused attention on me, I suddenly felt like a child that had foolishly poked a stick at a caged panther. He gave me a cool, brazen appraisal: 'My dear, I was going to ask you anyway,' he

growled. Thank goodness for that. Ms Booth wrote also of the "bizarre changes" to her way of life since May 1.

"To witness a historic moment can have peculiar repercussions. That moment for me was realised as I watched my charming, Marmite-sandwich-making brother-in-law change before my eyes at his Sedgfield constituency count into our leader."

Ms Booth said Mr Blair was "warmer than Pitt the Younger, more flamboyant than Disraeli, and more youthful than Lloyd George". The Czech overthrow of Soviet tyranny was called the Velvet Revolution. This was just as momentous: the Versace Revolution.

Ms Booth also had some bad words for Humphrey the former Downing Street cat. She said: "Our paths crossed one afternoon in the Downing Street lobby. He looked a bit ragged. Moreover, he had the recognisance of a very senior civil servant — the cat was called Humphrey for nothing."

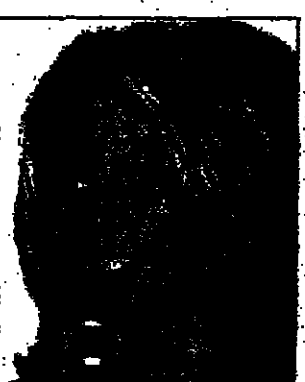
"Indeed, he gave me such a withering look of contempt that I shall never forget him. Nor will I forget the unpleasant odour that followed him about."

She added: "I certainly wouldn't have Humphrey living with me."

Diary, page 24



Alan Clark is described as a "steely-eyed Lothario" in an article by Lauren Booth, Cherie Blair's sister



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Beginning of the end for council tendering

By POLLY NEWTON
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Government took the first step yesterday towards scrapping rules that require councils to offer service contracts to the private sector. Hilary Armstrong, the Local Government Minister, named 35 areas where councils will be partly exempted from compulsory competitive tendering introduced by the Conservatives. Administrative work carried out by two police authorities, Cleveland and Greater Manchester, will also be included in the change, which begins next April.

A trial system, Best Value, aims to encourage local authorities to provide quality services as efficiently as possible, but without fear of being undercut by a private company offering a lower standard. Councils will be expected to consult local taxpayers before striking a balance between cost and quality. Ms Armstrong said that authorities must not assume that they could keep all their contracts in-house regardless of cost. At a conference organised by the Local Government Association, she said that support for local government could decline, and councils could find themselves under threat of abolition by a future government.

Legislation is necessary to wholly to exempt councils from CCT.

Church sets out to reclaim 2000 for Christianity

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

AS PLANS gather pace for the millennium celebrations vigorous attempts to reclaim the event for Christianity are underway in the nation's churches. A logo has been designed, candles are being made, a special service written and new songs in an attempt to link the secular festivities with the date's religious provenance.

A team appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Dr George Carey and Dr David Hope, is touring the country with the "Millennium Roadshow" urging clergy and churchgoers nationwide to use the occasion to proselytise.

"Two thousand is just a number with no content, no meaning, no significance, unless people are prepared to make some reference to Jesus of Nazareth," said the Rev Stephen Lynas, Archbishops' officer for the millennium, yesterday.

Addressing an audience of clergy and laity at the roadshow, in London for the day, Mr Lynas said: "The millennium is but two years and three weeks away. Yet one of the things we have yet to grasp is the question of whose millennium it is."

Even though the millennium was essentially marking the 2000th birthday of Jesus Christ, both churches and the

public were failing to make this link at present, he said. "Here in the capital, there is a great expectation about partying, and a lot of rude comment about the Dome. But people don't really know what the millennium is about. We have to remind people that it means something."

He urged a return to the Latin, *anno domini*, "the year of our Lord". Mr Lynas said: "We must claim the year for ourselves. We actually have to say, this belongs to us. The churches' task for the millennium is to forge a link in people's minds between the year 2000 and the name of Jesus Christ."

He was speaking just days after Peter Mandelson told Parliament that the New Millennium Experience company had been told to concentrate on "spiritual renewal". Mr Mandelson, in a written reply to a question, said the role Christianity had played "in shaping this country and the rest of the world over the past 2000 years" would be emphasised.

But the experience would also reflect the multi-faith nature of British society. The churches' millennium roadshow, organised by the ecumenical body, Churches Together in England, will use a straightforward logo, with the words "New Start".

Mandelson fails in nutrition intervention

By JILL SHERMAN
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PETER MANDELSON has failed in his attempt to intervene over the role of the Food Standards Agency, the new food safety watchdog.

The White Paper on the agency, which has now been postponed till January, will confirm that the responsibility for nutritional standards will move from the Health Department to the agency.

But Mr Mandelson, the Minister without Portfolio, had been pressing for nutrition to stay at Health, suggesting that the agency should confine itself to food safety. Professor Philip James, the scientist who is to head the agency, has argued that the new body should advise on policy on nutrition. Others on the Cabinet sub-committee on the agency, chaired by David Clark, are said to have agreed.

A draft White Paper was circulated last month assuming that this would be the case. But Mr Mandelson intervened at the last moment. Whitehall sources suspect that his request was linked to food industry fears that the agency would take a tough line on nutritional labelling which could affect sales. Mr Mandelson has vehemently denied that he has come under any pressure.

Beef issue, page 4

Writer who went to school with Prince Charles changed name for career as gossip columnist

Mystery man who ended in shop doorway

BY ADRIAN LEE, ADAM FRESKO, DANIEL MCGROARY AND KATHERYN KNIGHT

PICTURES of a fresh-faced Prince Charles hang on the panelled walls of Hill House International School at Hans Crescent, near Sloane Square in Chelsea. One, taken in January 1957, shows the eight-year-old Prince arriving nervously for his first day.

One face that could not be found in a gallery of former pupils was that of Clive Harold. Mr Harold told the Prince yesterday that he had taught him about his big ears and they had swapped sweaters as young pupils at Hill House. He recalled how they tramped through the streets of Chelsea to play football.

The Prince, visiting the *Big Issue* office in London, clearly could not remember him, and the school will find no record of Clive Harold having attended. Nor does St Catherine's House have a birth certificate for him.

Indeed, shortly after the Prince and Mr Harold parted, officials from St James's Palace were on the case, ringing Millfield School where Mr Harold said he went after spending two years streamed with the Prince.

Harry Hobson, Millfield's archivist, confirmed he had received a call from St James's Palace. "I spent several hours going through every record we have but I could find no trace of a pupil called Clive Harold. When I called the Palace back and told them we had no records they seemed grateful for the information."

The answer appears to lie in the *nom de plume* Mr Harold adopted for his career as a journalist and writer. He is believed to have been born in Bristol in 1948 under the name of Clive H-Stutter. At Millfield they have a record of a Clive Stutter. It is understood the two met when Prince Charles joined Hill House in January 1957.

One major discrepancy in

Mr Harold's story is that he met the Prince when he was five years old. He also claims to have been in the same stream as the young Charles for two years. However, the Prince did not go to Hill House until he was eight, in January 1957, and only stayed for two terms. In October 1957 he moved to Cheam school in Berkshire.

While Charles was being groomed as the Prince of Wales, Mr Harold said he became a journalist, working for *Women's Own*, the *Evening Standard* and *The Sun*. He claims to be the first journalist to interview the film

hellraiser himself. "He had a delightful wife called Linda and she was right for him because she treated him like a child. He was a showbiz groupie and he often dressed better than the people he was interviewing, with lots of gold and leather jackets."

Mr Harold is believed to have married twice, having Joby by his first marriage before marrying a woman called Eva.

David Dorman, editor in chief of *Woman's Own* and *Now* magazine, was deputy features editor in 1982 when Mr Harold worked there between 1981 and 1983. He said: "I don't think even he would pretend he was the best journalist in the world. He attempted to write a gossip column for *Woman's Own* without every worrying about deadlines."

"He dressed the part and looked the part of a gossip columnist, always looking smart and the women fell for it. They loved him and frequently rang the office for him. He was always someone who could have ended up running the *Daily Mirror* as easily as selling the *Big Issue*."

As well as reporting, Mr Harold also wrote a book about encounters with extra terrestrials called *The Uninvited* in 1979, which got to number eight in best seller list. He said: "I sold the film rights to my book in Hollywood but nothing came of it."

According to Mr Harold yesterday, his downfall began 10 years ago when his second marriage failed. "While things were going well in my career, my private life was falling apart. I realised that I had not given enough time to my family and friends. I suppose the booze got me in the end. I lost my house and one day I woke up in a shop doorway in the Strand. I had lost everything."



Mr Harold's book became a best-seller

actor Sylvester Stallone, to have written a gossip column for *Women's Own*, and to have travelled to New York and Hollywood to interview the rich and famous.

During the late 1970s and the early 1980s, when the Prince became engaged to Diana Spencer, Mr Harold was working in Los Angeles as a showbusiness writer, interviewing stars for magazines and newspapers. In 1979 he conducted an interview for *The Sun* with the actor Lee Marvin about his life as a hell-raiser.

According to one colleague, he was something of a



Prince Charles, below, arriving at Hill House school and, above second left, playing football in Chelsea watched by members of the Royal Family



Prince and the pauper

Continued from page 1

ing came of it. While things were going well in my career, my private life was falling apart. I realised that I had not given enough time to my family and friends.

"I suppose the booze got me in the end."

"I have been married twice and it was when my second marriage failed that things really fell apart. I lost my house and one day I woke up in a shop doorway in the Strand. I had lost everything."

He said that over the next ten years he fought hard to try to pull himself together, with varying success. "I have joined a writing

class here and teach others to do what I should be doing."

John Bird, *The Big Issue* founder, said later: "The Prince told me as he left 'It just shows you, doesn't it?'"

"This meeting illustrates that anyone can find themselves on the streets, no matter what start they had in life."

Fellow vendors and staff at *The Big Issue* had only learnt of Mr Harold's privileged background as the son of "a well-known city millionaire financier" minutes before the Prince's arrival.

Jason Searle, the senior sales manager, said: "I laughed and said 'yeh, so did I' but he insisted it was all

true. He had just come in to pick up his magazines to sell and we asked for volunteers to meet the Prince."

Mr Harold was selective in the autobiographical information he was prepared to divulge about himself until he accepted a lucrative offer from a tabloid newspaper.

Last night Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Townsend, the headmaster of Hill House, said he could not remember Mr Harold and Millfield School had no record either.

However, journalist colleagues thought Harold was a *nom de plume* he adopted in later years after beginning life as Clive Stutter.

... and a rich man returns to rags

BY RICHARD DUCE

A DOWN-AND-OUT rescued from the streets of London by a wealthy German woman has returned to Britain to highlight the plight of the homeless.

Steven Smith and Hannelore Gais fell in love more than 13 years ago before she realised that he was a drug addict and sleeping rough. Undeterred, she introduced him to her family in Munich, where the couple married and now live in a £200,000 house. He kicked his drug habit and embarked on a successful career in property.

Mr Smith, 54, has returned to Leeds, where in the 1980s he also slept rough, and hopes to organise a march to lobby Parliament. To get publicity for his cause he will again sleep rough for two



Steven Smith, now wealthy, and his wife Hannelore

weeks, his only currency a phonecard to contact home to Munich.

Earlier this week he shed his designer clothes in a lavatory at Leeds station, to bed down on a camping mat in freezing temperatures. Minutes after the change he admitted he already felt dif-

ferent. "No one looks at you when you are a tramp — you become a nobody."

He added yesterday: "I believe I have to give something back to the life I once lived. It will remind me of how lucky I am. I had been living a life of destruction for five years and would have

continued to do so if I had not met Hannelore."

His wife, 42, said: "He feels very strongly about his past and is able to empathise with people living on the street and the hellhole lifestyle they have. I knew I had to let him go back to face old memories and raise public awareness about homelessness."

Mr Smith spotted his future wife in a London pub. High on amphetamines, he made an approach to her. "I knew she was special. I knew I had to get to know her and that is what saved me."

Mr Smith said he had been determined not to let Hannelore go. "A new softer bell was ringing in my head and I felt there was a light at the end of the tunnel. Somehow I got myself admitted to a psychiatric ward and took control of my drug addiction."

Freak wave washed yachtsman to death

BY A CORRESPONDENT

A MAN died when a freak wave swept him off a yacht which his wife had bought him as a 40th birthday present, an inquest was told yesterday.

The 20ft wave washed Paul Andree into the Solent as he accompanied a yachting expert on the *Zoe Ann's* maiden voyage to Dartmouth, where extra safety equipment was to be fitted. Beverly Andree told the inquest at Portsmouth that her husband was a safety-conscious man. She added that she and Mr Andree, a construction engineer from East London, had been awarded crew-competence certificates after attending a week-long course.

However, the inquest was told that Mr Andree had repeatedly ignored suggestions that he wear a lifejacket and harness during the trip on November 8. Andrew Lander, a qualified yacht master, who had been contracted to sail the vessel from its berth in Chichester, West Sussex, to Dartmouth, said that despite worsening weather conditions Mr Andree was not wearing a lifejacket or a harness. "I had said that he should be clipped

but he did not reply. He was not wearing a lifejacket or a harness."

Mr Andree was swept overboard half a mile from Chichester harbour. "He was holding what I assumed was a harness. But it was a main sheet rope. Then another wave broke and he was swept away. I did not see him again."

Mr Lander tried to look for him but the engine failed. He threw out a marker buoy and lifebelt and signalled mayday. James Kenyon, the East Hampshire Coroner, recorded a verdict of accidental death.



Andree was not wearing harness or lifejacket

Wife who ran away with boy walks free

BY A CORRESPONDENT

A MARRIED woman who ran away to America with a boy aged 14 admitted several charges when she appeared before a High Court judge in Nottingham yesterday.

The 33-year-old mother admitted gross indecency with the boy — who was then 13 — between June 1 and September 1 last year. She also pleaded guilty to two charges of indecent assault and of abducting a child.

Nottingham Crown Court was told the woman and the boy had had a consensual sexual relationship for a year before they flew to the United States to start a new life. They were arrested by the FBI in July this year after spending ten days travelling in Florida.

Mr Justice Potts put the woman on probation for two years on each count, to run concurrently. He said he took into account the boy's own maturity, the punishment she had already endured, and the effect a custodial sentence would have on her family.

"I fully recognise... that the boy was a willing and active participant in what went on. I also proceed on the basis that at all times you and

he, to put it at its lowest, were extremely fond of each other. But even these matters cannot excuse the seriousness of what you did."

Although no one would ever be certain, the judge said it appeared to him that the boy in question had not suffered long-term harm. The boy admitted he was not "screwed up and does not feel he has been abused by you."

He told the woman: "The effect of what you did, however, on yourself and on your own family has been catastrophic. You were held in custody in shackles in Florida for six weeks in July. I have not the slightest doubt that you and your husband suffered from the attentions of the media."

Testimonials he had received from members of the public had helped to influence his decision. He had also attached great importance to a letter submitted by her husband. "It says a great deal about his qualities and a great deal about yours."

Mr James Chadwin, QC, for the defence, said the woman was the victim of an unhappy marriage and had felt vulnerable and unloved.



Shoppers rush to buy banned cuts of beef

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

Roger Kelsey, of the National Federation of Meat and Food Traders, which represents 10,000 independent

Joe Collier, of Eastwoods Butchers in Berkhamsted,

Taking stock pensive farmers at Murton livestock centre near York yesterday. Butchers, however, reported increased sales of bone-in beef

About 3 per cent of beef is eaten on the bone. Sales are worth £150 million a year, with £70 million sold through shops and £80 million via

The risk to the public is described as extremely small. It is estimated that next year only three out of 2.2 million

ciation said drivers should not return to Ireland, as they have done since Sunday when the protests began. Brian Farrell, its spokesman, said the 4,700 member companies had lost too much money to tolerate further blockades.

**Leading article and
Letters: page 25**

By ROBIN YOUNG

"The bouillon oxtail with red wine and truffle essence is off," announced Nico Ladenis, the chef-proprietor, consigning the lead item on his £74-a-head gastronomic menu to the dustbin. "We cannot serve that

I joined him. "If people order it specifically, well and good," Mr Ladenis said. He added: "We are not so much affected as some. Since 1976 I have made my basic brown sauce principally from chicken stock but there are some veal and beef bones in too. Just a few in a very large pot, to add a little extra gelatine." The

The sweetbreads, like the pigeon, duck breast, veal cutlet and to a less

"The usual killing age for veal is more like nine months or just under

Other customers in the dining room tucked into fillet steaks, BSE publicity and a £12 supplement notwithstanding. "I gave up paying attention to health experts years ago," one said. "I am 68 years old. If I contract BSE I will be ga-ga when I am 80. So where is the news in that?"



**Laden is supping his
oxtail soup yesterday**

Pheasants are also notably cheap this year. Those in Asda are selling at £2.99 each. Hitherto more than half British game has been exported but the strength of the pound has damaged exports, pushing down prices at home.

Pheasants are also notably cheap this year. Those in Asda are selling at £2.99 each. Hitherto more than half British game has been exported but the strength of the pound has damaged exports, pushing down prices at home.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF DRIVING MISS DAISY

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A simple step that shuts the door on chaos

IF THE Englishman's home is his castle, the front doorstep is the closest he has to a drawbridge. A doorstep is the threshold which nobody crosses except by invitation.

From the humblest country cottage and the artisan's terrace house to the grandest mansion in Belgravia, there is hardly a dwelling in Britain without a doorstep. It keeps the outer world at bay and lends a little dignity to every entrance. More than that, it is a place where a milk bottle can be left without seeming abandoned for anyone to seize.

A million housewives scrubbed front doorsteps, not just to put on a show to the world but to remove summer dust or the attentions of any passing dog. When streets had no paving, doorsteps came into being to divert water into rudimentary gutters.

In a deluge, the step stopped water from pouring under the front door. This is no small matter: in recent years, when some shopping streets have been pedestrianised, shopkeepers have found rainwater gushing in. Even in the late 17th century, many London houses had

The front doorstep is to be banished by new building regulations. Marcus Binney dwells on its cultural significance

basements, often with the kitchen at the front. To win a little light, the ground floor was raised a few steps so that a better window could be introduced. When front basement areas became common in the mid-18th century, front doors were raised still higher to provide more light and air for basement rooms below.

A raised front doorstep is a feature of terrace houses all over Europe and North America. The canal-side houses of Amsterdam had a "stoep", a flight of four or five steps to raise the main rooms above flood water, and this was repeated in the much taller stoops of New York "brownstones", where New Yorkers came out to chat on hot evenings.

It is inevitable in this age of regulation that the doorstep should be abolished. A few years ago, in Gibraltar, Treasury regulations deemed that any army house with a step or two at the front door was sub-standard. The military had to

forsake elegant Regency houses in the old town for new, Aldershot-style boxes, shrouded in mist for much of the year on the southernmost point of the Rock. The doorstep is thought to have become a widespread feature of townscapes in the Victorian era (Rachel Kelly writes). Richard Holder, senior architectural adviser to the Victorian Society, said: "Chimneys belched soot and doorsteps did get filthy. Local government was so disorganised that the business of roadsweeping was not carried out."

In this century, doorsteps proved a feature of popular culture, from the music-hall song *On Mother Kelly's Doorstep* to scenes in *Coronation Street*. They enable the traditional act of carrying a bride over the threshold. "Somehow, carrying your bride over a slope doesn't seem quite the same," Richard Pollard, secretary of Save Britain's Heritage, said.



Making an impressive entrance: earlier this century, a spotless doorstep was a matter of domestic pride

Probation defended by judge for killer

By RICHARD DUCE

A JUDGE accepted yesterday that he was open to criticism for placing a mentally disturbed killer on probation.

Judge Michael Coombe said he believed doctors' evidence that Stacey Adams, 59, who stabbed Diane Bristow 42 times, could be treated for his illness rather than detained in hospital.

An Old Bailey jury had earlier cleared Adams of murder but convicted him of manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. The judge said: "I suppose in the circumstances of this case, I would have had in mind a light term of about three years."

However, the judge said that Adams had had almost the equivalent of a three-year term in custody while on remand. "It is right that I should stress that... because it may be that members of the public might criticise me because it may appear he has got away without punishment. He has already had a deprivation of liberty."

Miss Bristow, 59, and Adams were staying at the same house in Thornton Heath, South London. Dr James Anderson, who has been treating Adams at the medium-security Bracon Centre in Bexley, said he had identified an "organic defect" in his brain. "He was isolated, depressed and extremely frightened and aroused at the time of the killing."

Solicitor in dock over angry remark

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A SOLICITOR who was driven to remark privately that the court clerk was a "silly cow" is facing a disciplinary investigation after being reported by a police officer.

Arnold Rosen, a London solicitor, is being investigated by the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors after speaking his mind to his client who was on charges of false accounting at Woodspring Magistrates' Court at Westminster.

His comments were made after he had sought an adjournment in the case and the Bench had withdrawn to consider his request. While waiting, he had a conversation with the defendant, standing in the vicinity of the dock.

His exasperation arose over

what he saw as the court clerk's intervention in his request for an adjournment and putting forward of points as to why his request should not be granted.

Yesterday Mr Rosen said he could not confirm the use of the words "silly cow". But he added: "Those words were in accordance with my sentiments at the time."

The *Law Journal*, which reported Mr Rosen's case, said: "In a perfect world, perhaps solicitors should not vent their displeasure to their clients. In the less than perfect world in which we live, they often do." So, it adds, do police officers. "If each were to be reported to the OSS or the relevant chief constable, where would we all be?"



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WHITEHOUSE
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Al Fayed accused of £10m bribe bid

Rowland's writs charge Harrods owner of ordering deposit box break-in, Andrew Pierce reports

TINY ROWLAND is accusing Mohamed Al Fayed of offering him £10 million and the ownership of an exclusive shirt shop to level false bribery allegations against Michael Howard, the former Home Secretary.

Six writs have been issued against Mr Al Fayed and five of his alleged co-conspirators. In them, Mr Rowland also accuses the owner of Harrods of ordering staff to break in to his safe deposit box at the Knightsbridge store. The box contained precious jewels and confidential documents.

The papers, placed in the High Court yesterday, accuse Mr Al Fayed of masterminding the break-in to try to uncover material with which to blackmail Mr Rowland, the former head of Lorrho, into lying on oath about Mr Howard accepting bribes.

Mr Rowland, 79, claims in the writ that Mr Al Fayed, 64, offered him a sweeter of £10 million, plus the ownership of Turnbull & Asser, shirtmakers to the Prince of Wales, in return for telling a Parliamentary select committee he had paid Mr Howard £1.5 million to open a Department of Trade and Industry investigation into the takeover of the House of Fraser.

Mr Al Fayed has waged a long campaign to overturn the findings of the DTI inquiry. It concluded that he was a liar and a cheat. A subsequent

Parliamentary investigation concluded that there was no evidence that Mr Howard acted improperly in the DTI investigation.

According to the writs, after the safe deposit box break-in the two men met over lunch on the fifth floor of Harrods in March 1996. Mr Al Fayed "claimed that he had information and or documents damaging to" Mr Rowland.

Mr Rowland claims that the purpose of the break-in "was to try to obtain material which he could use, or threaten to use," against him, "to persuade him to give false evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Standards and Privileges, which was at that time about to commence an inquiry into allegations which had been made by Mr Al Fayed against The Right Hon Michael Howard MP." In March this year the committee dismissed Mr Al Fayed's allegations that Mr Howard had accepted payments of between £1 million and £1.5 million to launch the investigation.

Mr Rowland is seeking damages and an order for "delivery up" of any of his goods still in Mr Al Fayed's possession, or payment of their equivalent value and damages for conversion or trespass of his goods.

Harrods has categorically denied the allegations. Michael Rogers, legal director of



Tiny Rowland, left, and Mohamed Al Fayed seemingly made up their differences in October 1993 when they shook hands in the Harrods food hall

the store, said: "In view of the civil proceedings which exist between Mr Al Fayed and Mr Rowland, it is inappropriate and wrong to comment in detail. However, the allegations are categorically denied. We are satisfied that we will be able to prove in court that they are false and malicious."

The break-in was first alleged last month when Neil Hamilton, who was accused of taking cash for Parliamentary

questions from Mr Al Fayed, gave evidence on oath to the Standards and Privileges Committee. Tory MPs on the committee refused to uphold the findings of the Parliamentary Commissioner that Mr Hamilton had taken the money because they were denied a chance to cross-examine Mr Al Fayed.

Mr Rowland claims that early in December 1995, shortly before the break-in, the

security box contained various personal documents, audio tapes, a gold cigarette case, six or seven uncut rubies, 15 to 20 cut emeralds, three or four original Tanzanite stones, between six and eight rare Tibetan silver coins, and a rare Tibetan stamp. The emeralds were from a set of 25 Mr Rowland said he took from his mine in southern Rhodesia in 1960 to cut and pass on to the Queen Mother as a gift. Six

were said to have been given to her after Mr Rowland had a gold box made at Garrard, the crown jewellers.

The other people named in the writs are Colin Dalman, manager of the safe deposit boxes; John Macnamara of Beckenham, southeast London, who was then a director of security for a Harrods subsidiary; John Allen, a senior security manager of Caterham, Surrey; Mark

Griffiths, who was Mr Al Fayed's assistant; and his bodyguard, Paul Handley-Greaves.

The antipathy between Mr Al Fayed and Mr Rowland dates back to the 1980s, when Mr Rowland lost the battle for control of House of Fraser to Mr Al Fayed. However, in 1993, the two shook hands in the store's food hall after apparently ending their conflict.

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Lawrence letters tell of frustration over novel

By JOHN VINCENT

A REVEALING archive of letters by D.H. Lawrence relating to his difficulties in publishing *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has surfaced in London 67 years after his death.

The letters are being sold at Sotheby's next Thursday by the estate of his close friend, the late Juliette Huxley, Swiss wife of the renowned biologist and zoologist Sir Julian Huxley, brother of the novelist Aldous. They are expected to fetch up to £27,000.

In one letter to Juliette he writes: "I laugh at you when you say, 'What if Anthony [the Huxleys' son] were 16, and read this novel! He'd be too bored at 16; but at 20 of course he should read it."

"Was your mind a sexual blank at 16? is anybody's? and what ails the mind in that respect is that it has nothing to go on, grinds away in abstraction. So I laugh at you and go on laughing... For absurd-



Lawrence: "People in England make me mad"

ities I laugh at everybody, including myself. But at the essential person I don't laugh. And of course, you ought to know it, and not have these silly misgivings."

On the difficulties of having the sexually explicit *Lady Chatterley* published, he writes: "I've been having a tussle with my novel publishers, agent etc in London hold-

ing up hands of pious horror... and trying to make me feel disastrously in the wrong."

In another 1928 letter he writes: "People in England make me so mad. What with one thing and another - especially Lady C - that I feel I'd be downright ill if I saw those dirty cliffs of Dover just now." Frustrated by the confiscation of copies of the book, Lawrence says: "I want to make a row: can't sit down to it. All too exasperating... I long to get away from everything."

In an earlier letter he writes, "Lady Chatterley is being printed by a little printer in Florence, in an old little shop where nobody understands a word of English, not even those basic foundation-words... Ah, teach them to your mother, it's never too late to learn."

The novel was not published in Britain in its unpurgated form until 1961, after a celebrated obscenity trial.

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Southern comfort gives men the best hopes of a long life

BY MARK HENDERSON

MEN living in Cambridge, Guildford and Woking can expect to live nearly seven years longer than those in parts of Manchester and Liverpool, researchers have found.

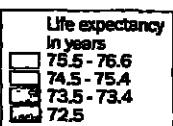
England's longest-lived women — from Bromley in southeast London and Dorset — have a life expectancy four years greater than in Manchester and Liverpool.

The study in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* shows that the five poorest health authorities in Britain record the shortest male longevity. Life expectancy has risen much faster in wealthy parts of the country, while in inner London it has increased at a rate well below the national average.

The report's authors, Verna Soni Raleigh and Victor Kiri of the University of Surrey, suggest that more suicides, murders and accidental deaths, including drug overdoses, among male residents of deprived areas are to blame, along with higher rates of heart disease and lung cancer. They plan further research.

Men in Cambridge can expect to live to an average of 76 years and seven months, against a national average of 74 years one month. Men living in Manchester, England's poorest health authority, have a life expectancy of 69 years 11 months. Women live on average to 81 years five

Rank	Health authority	Life expectancy 1992-4 1994-6
1	Cambridge	76.6 74.4
2	West Surrey	76.4 74.2
3	East Surrey	76.2 73.4
4	Barnet	76.0 73.9
5	Dorset	75.9 73.8
6	Bromley	75.7 73.8
14	North Essex	75.6 73.5
46	South Cheshire	74.4 72.2
64	Leeds	73.9 71.2
69	Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster	73.5 71.3
76	Walsall	73.1 70.8
88	South Birmingham	72.6 70.8
95	St Helens and Knowsley	72.4 70.0
97	Sunderland	72.1 70.3
98	West Pennine	72.1 70.3
101	Camden and Islington	71.8 70.9
102	Southeast London	71.7 70.7
103	East London and the City	71.7 70.3
104	Liverpool	71.2 69.8
105	Manchester	69.9 69.2
England (Average)		74.1 72.1



months in Bromley and Dorset, but to 76 years and eight months in Manchester. The national average is 79 years six months.

East and West Surrey, Barnet and Solihull also score well for male longevity, with Manchester, Liverpool, East London and the City, south-east London, and Camden and Islington at the foot of the table. Bromley and Dorset are followed by Cambridge, West Surrey and Exeter and North

Devon in the women's table, with Liverpool and Manchester joined by Sunderland, St Helens and Knowsley, and West Pennine at the bottom.

The five authorities with the lowest male life expectancy come lowest on the Jarman index of social deprivation, used by the NHS to allocate funds to GPs. Bromley, West Surrey, East Surrey and Solihull are all among the least deprived health authorities.

Dr Soni Raleigh said the report showed a growing gap between the quality and length of life of those living in wealthy and poor areas. "The life expectancy variations are widening," she said. "The most deprived areas today are still below what was recorded in the most affluent areas ten years ago."

She said women lived longer than men in all areas, but that the difference was most marked in poor health au-

thorities. "Men in deprived areas are much less well than women," she said.

Richard Smith, chief executive of the British Medical Association publishing group, said the figures corresponded to evidence that men living in poor communities were at highest risk of dying from accidents, suicide or violent crime, including drug overdoses.

"We are seeing external factors which have particular

effects in men," Dr Smith said. He added that the report indicated that health education messages were not getting through to the poorest, with poor diet and heavy smoking and drinking causing above-average levels of lung cancer and heart disease.

He said that squalid council housing was a major factor behind the figures, explaining the much larger number of winter deaths recorded in Britain.

What's safe to eat depends on where you are

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

DIETARY guidelines issued by official sources are confusing, contradictory and may often give bad advice, according to a pressure group dedicated to the pleasures of food and drink.

A study carried out by Arise, (Associates for Research into the Science of Enjoyment), looked at dietary guidelines across 21 countries and found huge variations in recommended food allowances.

While the World Health Organisation recommends a maximum of ten eggs a week, the Department of Health's Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy has recommended only one and the British Heart Foundation four.

Recommendations about alcohol vary equally widely. France tops the table, recommending a maximum intake for men of 60 grams a day (seven to eight glasses of wine), while Sweden puts the figure at less than one glass of wine a day. Britain comes in the middle of this table, at four glasses a day for men and three for women. Germany makes no recommendations at all.

Advice on salt reflects a similar confusion. Germany, at the top, suggests a maximum of 10g a day while Sweden, at the bottom, suggests 2g. Poland,

which considers salt a good thing, recommends a minimum of 1.44g a day and sets no maximum. The British advice is a maximum of 6g.

Arise is an international group of researchers united by the belief that food and drink should be enjoyed, not treated as a guilty indulgence. It is co-ordinated by Professor David Warburton of the University of Reading and makes no secret of the fact that it receives funding from food, drink and tobacco companies.

The new report concentrates on a range of foodstuffs that have been subject to dietary advice around the world.

Professor Warburton says: "Dietary guidelines claim to be based on scientific evidence which does not recognise international boundaries, yet a comparison of guidelines around the world shows them to be so different as to appear arbitrary."

The report does not address the question of beef, since this has not been the subject of dietary advice in most countries. But Professor Warburton said that an earlier survey by Arise had shown that 85 per cent of respondents were aware of the alleged risks of red meat and a quarter said they felt guilty about eating it.

Stroke risk slight for women on the Pill

BY IAN MURRAY

THREE women in 100,000 on the Pill have a very slightly increased risk of thrombosis compared with women not using oral contraceptives, according to research carried out in five European countries including Britain. That number would be reduced if doctors avoid prescribing the Pill to women with high blood pressure or other evidence of heart disease.

The research, published today in the *British Medical Journal*, involved women aged between 16 and 44, 220 of whom had suffered a stroke and 775 who had not. They had been on the Pill for at least three months.

The researchers found a risk of a stroke for women on the Pill but that is small because the illness affects so few in this age group.

Cell transplant to foetus developed

BY IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

TRANSPLANTS in the womb can cure common, inherited blood diseases. The relatively simple technique has to be carried out on foetuses aged between 12 and 15 weeks in order to prevent rejection.

The diseases are genetic disorders of the red blood cells that cause anaemia and painful crises when they cannot deliver oxygen properly to the body. Sufferers may require hundreds of blood transfusions throughout their lives.

The disorders, which include sickle cell anaemia and thalassaemia, can be diagnosed at about the twelfth week of pregnancy but until now no treatment has been available. Researchers at Nottingham University who have been studying primitive blood-forming cells discovered some that can be used for transplantation into an affected foetus.

These "stem cells" have the capacity to produce red blood

cells almost exclusively and are therefore uniquely suitable for transplantation into a foetus affected with a disorder.

Ultrasound is used to guide a fine needle through the mother's abdomen and into the abdomen of the foetus, where a small volume of cells is injected. So far only 30 babies worldwide have been treated this way and there have been remarkable successes, although further research will be needed.

Rhodri Jones, who heads the research team, will describe the operation today to the British Society for Immunology congress in Brighton. "The foetus does not develop a fully competent immune system until after 15 weeks, so even a mismatched tissue can be transplanted without rejection occurring," he says. "Most importantly treatment can be offered before any damage has occurred."

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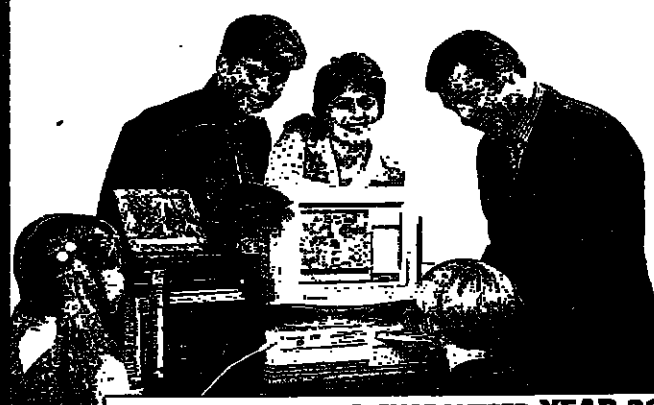
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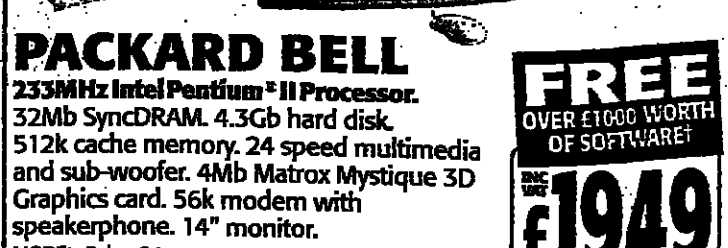
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THE TIMES FRIDAY DECEMBER 5 1997

EDUCATION BILL 13

Central powers will be key to long-term school reform

By any yardstick, the Bill is the most ambitious recasting of state education since 1988, says John O'Leary

PARENTS responded in unprecedented numbers when the Government published its Education White Paper this summer. Almost half of the 6,000 submissions were from individuals. Almost all of them concerned about standards.

Few of the respondents will see an immediate change in their children's schools as a result of yesterday's School Standards Bill, for all of its 125 clauses. But the legislation could change the shape of state education in the longer term.

David Blunkett, the Education

and Employment Secretary, freely admitted yesterday that the Bill is a centralising measure, designed to give ministers the levers of power over state schools that his predecessors have lacked.

Although intervention is still to be "in inverse proportion to success", schools that are deemed to be coasting, as well as those that are failing, will attract the attention of their local authority or even central

government. The whiff of central planning will send shivers through free marketeers and supporters of grant-maintained schools. Even the education action zones, which are to be testbeds of innovation in areas of social disadvantage and educational failure, carry echoes of the 1960s, when the more limited Education Priority Areas were the chosen panaceas.

Whether the Bill amounts to the

"historic settlement" to replace the 1944 Education Act claimed by Stephen Byers, the School Standards Minister, will depend on how the new powers are exercised.

The action zones, for example, will cover only a tiny fraction of England but their influence could be enormous if freeing schools from the national curriculum and altering teachers' pay and conditions produce better results. In the short

term, outside grant-maintained schools, the requirement for parents to sign home-school agreements and the use of detailed targets to monitor schools' performance will be the most obvious changes on the ground. Most grammar schools should have little to fear from ballots that can only be called by 20 per cent of parents at feeder primary schools.

The 125 clauses of the Bill contain

many overdue changes, such as the creation of a stronger role for parents and a more manageable system to get incompetent teachers out of the classroom. By any yardstick, it is the most ambitious recasting of state education since 1988.

Almost all the question marks surround the way in which local education authorities respond to what Mr Blunkett calls their "new job description" as the guardians of

standards. If they use their new powers to reassert a degree of control, which failed in the 1960s and 1970s, the Bill can only be a step back in the Government's education crusade. Although ministers can intervene, that would be a course of last resort.

Mr Blunkett acknowledged that improvement can come only from within schools. He must be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater in trying to deliver the Government's promise of much-needed educational progress.

Action zones and 'superheads' to tackle failure

EDUCATION action zones run by private companies and "superheads" paid up to £100,000 a year could be the testbeds for a deregulated state education system, ministers said yesterday as they launched the biggest schools reform for almost a decade.

An initial 25 action zones, covering areas of social disadvantage and educational underperformance, will each receive extra funding of £500,000 and have priority in a range of government initiatives. Schools will be able to opt out of the national curriculum and agreements on teachers' pay and conditions.

David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, said clusters of not more than 20 schools would spawn fresh ideas and flexible approaches to education. "No doubt experience in education action zones will have implications for the education service as a whole."

The initiative marked a further stage in the Government's move away from political and educational dogma. Bids to run action zones will be accepted from private companies, community groups and consortiums of schools acting without the approval of their local authority, as well as from the authorities themselves.

Stephen Byers, the School Standards Minister, said the zones might form the basis for "a new deal for the teaching profession" based on more flexible working arrange-

John O'Leary reports on the School Standards Bill and 'a new deal for teachers'

ments. "They will be pilots to see what works and what does not," he said.

The 221-page School Standards Bill puts into effect a range of measures. They include the abolition of grant-maintained schools, which will be given the option of becoming "foundation schools" with local authority representation on their governing bodies and shared responsibility for admissions policies.

Comprehensive schools will be barred from selecting part of their intake on academic ability but grammar schools will survive unless parents from their feeder primary schools vote to end selection.

Church schools, which resisted the Government's original proposals, will become "aided schools", while local authority schools will be renamed "community schools". Local authorities will be given new powers to monitor standards, agreeing annual targets for all state schools in their area and overseeing admissions policies. The Gov-

ernment will acquire new powers to take over "failing" local authorities and will be able to order them to contract out services that are considered inadequate. The authorities, which will include parental representatives for the first time, will be required to delegate more money to schools in the new year.

The legislation also gives ministers power to close failing schools, reopening them under a new name and with new leadership to give them a "fresh start". Incompetent teachers in all state schools will be subject to new, faster dismissal procedures.

Local authorities will be expected to issue warning notices to schools found to be underperforming, even if their results appear respectable. Those which do not improve could be taken over by the authority, which could appoint additional governors.

The Liberal Democrats said the plans for education action zones were exciting but said ministers should go a step further and impose them in the place of failing local education authorities.

Head teachers agreed action zones were an "exciting idea" for a few failing schools. But David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, added: "The vast majority of the schools which will be in education action zones... need support, not fancy remedies such as 'superheads' or talking shops disguised as forums."



Peter Clark, the head who was drafted in to save the Ridings School in Halifax. It needs a "light touch", he said

Changes will not be a 'quick fix'

By David Charter Education Correspondent

SUCCESSFUL head teachers will be able to become leaders of Education Action Zones with control of up to 20 schools and a salary of £100,000.

These "superheads" would be expected to work closely with all the head teachers in the zone and direct the annual budget of up to £500,000.

Local education authorities or a local business will also be able to nominate the director of the zone, who would effectively replace the council chief education officer. The director will still be expected to work closely with the local authority.

But he or she will be directed by groups on the zone forum, which could include businesses, faith groups, community organisations and the Training and Enterprise Council.

Leading head teachers said yesterday that "superheads" should not be seen as a quick fix for failing schools but would have to work on long-term development.

William Atkinson, the head who helped to rescue Phoenix High School in West London from failure, said: "We want people who roll up their sleeves and get stuck in, with buckets of energy and clear vision. If we are not careful it could be a bureaucratic nightmare with the various partners not working in cohesion

but at war with each other."

Peter Clark, who was drafted in to rescue The Ridings School in Halifax while staying on as head at his own school, Raistrick High, said the idea of "superheads" could work provided they acted as "light-touch" consultants.

Dr Peter Mason, who was recently appointed head of the four Stamford independent schools in Lincolnshire, said: "If you are going to influence a dozen senior staff across several schools so they are going to raise the morale of the other staff, it is going to require a tremendous amount of energy and commitment and it is not going to happen overnight."

Inner-city primary is helped by accountant

By David Charter

THE head of an inner-city primary school praised by inspectors raised standards with the help of her mentor, a senior partner in a firm of accountants.

Children and staff at Winton primary in King's Cross, London, are paired with local companies in a way the Government wants to encourage through Education Action Zones. Winton is in the borough of Islington, which is likely to be considered for action-zone status.

Three quarters of the children receive free school meals because they come from low-income families and fewer than half speak English when they arrive. The school was praised as "a stimulating place where children respond in an excellent way".

Jane Fulford, the head teacher, said the school benefited from its own links with local businesses and would welcome extra freedom to concentrate on key areas which the zone system would allow. It had been able to start raising standards using money from various funds to give children with special needs individual attention, another aim of action zones.

"My mentor, a senior partner at KPMG, has been fantastic," Mrs Fulford said. "We talk through all the challenges facing a head, like school development planning, appraising staff and budgeting. Our appraisal system has been made much more effective since I have looked at the business approach."

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The media under surveillance

Valerie Elliott visits the government unit that is keeping a 24-hour watch on the nation's news output

ALL new Whitehall press officers are to experience the hothouse of government by working for a period at the new media monitoring unit.

The unit opened this week, offering ministers and government departments a 24-hour run-down of breaking news and a digest of the newspapers. This fast service aims to enable departments to rebut rogue stories and to provide swift briefings for ministers.

In a small office on the eighth floor of the Central Office of Information building near Waterloo station, about eight staff are providing a 24-hour service by working a three-shift system. It may not be the most glamorous job in Whitehall, but they say that they enjoy the buzz of "being first with the news".

The staff are monitoring a bank of ten television screens showing BBC1, BBC2, ITV,

Channel 4, Channel 5, News 24 hours, CNN, Sky, Ceefax and Teletext. Each channel is being recorded on video tapes that will be stored for two weeks before being reused. Radio news bulletins and news and current affairs programmes such as Radio 4's *Today* and *The World At One* are also recorded.

An overnight review of papers is faxed to each departmental head of information by eam. Mike Grannatt, head of the Government Information and Communications Services, said that it had already enabled him to correct early morning radio and television bulletins.

A team of volunteers has been recruited to staff the unit for a pilot three-month period. Permanent staff are expected to be recruited in February.

After only four days in operation the unit has yet to prove its worth. The No 10 press office has praised the overnight review of the newspapers, but some press officers complain that the unit's summaries of news broadcasts are too long. But on advantage is that departmental press officers no longer need remain glued to their televisions and radios at lunchtime. The digest of lunchtime bulletins



On guard: a member of the unit's staff monitoring the bank of television screens

aries of news broadcasts are too long. But on advantage is that departmental press officers no longer need remain glued to their televisions and radios at lunchtime. The digest of lunchtime bulletins

was faxed to each department at 1.45pm yesterday. Ministers are also booking specific services. John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, who was in Kyoto for the environmental summit yesterday, asked for any references to the summit that had appeared on the Internet. As he is to appear on *Breakfast with Frost* this Sunday, he also asked for a fax to Japan on Saturday night with a digest of

day, asked for any references to the summit that had appeared on the Internet. As he is to appear on *Breakfast with Frost* this Sunday, he also asked for a fax to Japan on Saturday night with a digest of

Sunday newspaper stories. The Department of Health asked yesterday for details of tobacco sponsorship stories so that it could brief Tessa Jowell, the Public Health Minister, who was at talks in Brussels.

The unit's staff were pleased yesterday to learn about the resignation of Lord Chadlington, chairman of the Royal Opera Board, before the Department of Culture press office. The unit also informed the Transport Department about the Virgin train fire at Watford that led to the line to London Euston being closed.

But it is clear that the news digests must be used swiftly by departments to correct any inaccuracies. There was some dismay, for example, that reports that 750,000 savers would lose tax relief under the new individual savings accounts scheme were not picked up earlier. The Government believes that the real number of savers who will be worse off will be 300,000.

John O'Sullivan, a government press officer for 30 years, is on secondment from the Crown Prosecution Service as head of the unit. His motto is "If in doubt, shout". Government press officers and civil servants can expect the late-night call, and it might not be from a reporter.

Ministers are succumbing to a rash of reviews

THE Government cannot see a problem without setting up a review. Getting on for a hundred inquiries, reviews and task forces have been created since the election — and yesterday we had the first royal commission, on long-term care, with the promise also of an inquiry into the causes of BSE. This follows the announcement on Monday of a commission on the voting system under Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, and the broadening a few weeks ago of the remit of the Neill, formerly the Nolan, committee to cover the whole area of political funding. Government by review, complain the critics, while Whitehall cynics argue that ministers only set up inquiries when they know what will be recommended.

Inquiries do serve a purpose, or rather several purposes. Typically, they are set up as a way out of a pressing political problem, but they often lead to unforeseen consequences. The Nolan committee was hurriedly created by John Major in October 1994 after a wave of "cash-for-questions" allegations as a way of showing that public standards in Britain were generally high. Few Tories then foresaw how radical its proposals would be, but the committee had an authority which could not be challenged.

Similarly, during the Ecclestone affair, Tony Blair invoked the committee as a solution to everything to do with party funding. But in his haste new problems have been created. The Government has already promised action — on banning foreign donations and requiring disclosure of the names of donors of above £5,000 — which prejudices the Neill committee's work. Ministers are also considering regional spending limits in the European elections and for the contest to become London's mayor which cut across the committee's work.

The voting commission is a more calculated political exercise. It fulfills a pledge to the Liberal Democrats and defers a tricky decision which Mr Blair is not yet ready to take. It is not, however, just a delaying tactic. Although Lord Jenkins and his hard-headed group are unlikely to suggest anything unacceptable to Mr Blair, they still have a wide choice of possible systems — and their recommendation may form the basis of a new consensus.

The Government mainly uses reviews to establish the widest basis of support for controversial changes. Such inquiries seldom discover new facts — there is usually a vast weight of existing evidence. Their brief is to come up with practical options out of the many available. The Dearing inquiry on student and university finance was set up by Gillian Shephard with the backing of her then shadow David Blunkett to take the issue out of pre-election politics and to produce a long-term answer. That has made it less hard for Mr Blunkett to push through his proposals on student fees.

Royal Commissions went out of fashion during the Thatcher years. She and her advisers thought they knew the answers and did not

RIDDELL
ON POLITICS

want the type of time-wasting commissions which Harold Wilson liked — though Britain would have been better-off if some of the proposals (for example, of the Salmon commission on standards of conduct in public life) had been implemented. But the new one on long-term care has been asked to report within 12 months and may provide the authority of the good and the great for inevitably tricky and costly solutions.

The remit of the proposed BSE inquiry is still unclear. No one wants a repeat of the sprawling Scott investigation. Is the aim of any inquiry to be primarily historical — identifying what went wrong, why and when? There are dangers in trying to hunt for the guilty. There is also the possibility of compensation for victims of CJD, and therefore questions of immunity.

In the end, however much reviews and inquiries may shape, and take forward, the public debate on tricky issues, they are no substitute for politicians themselves taking tough decisions.

PETER RIDDELL

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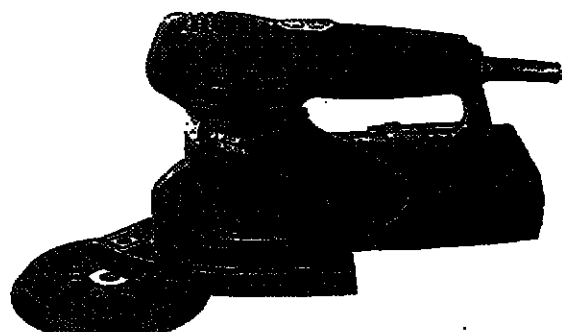
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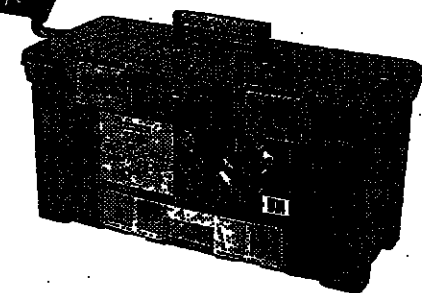
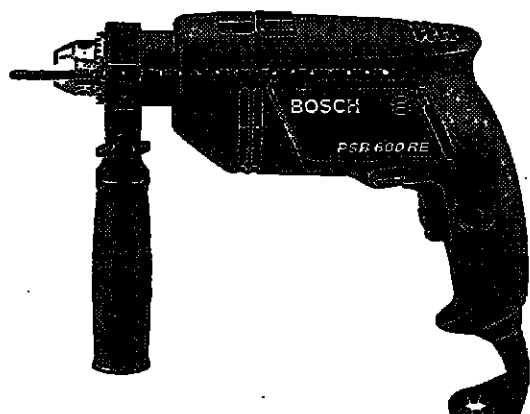
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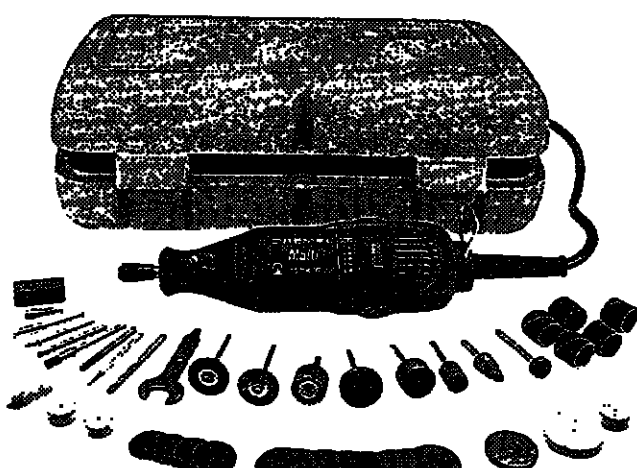
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There is little money to heat the orphanages. Orphanage Directors are having to beg for food from local villages and rarely know where the next meal is coming from. In some areas children, like Yordan, are going hungry and the cold could prove fatal for many children this winter. Without aid this could be catastrophic for Bulgaria's orphanage children.

The European Children's Trust, sister charity of The Romanian Orphanage Trust, is ready to distribute emergency food packs, clothes and fuel to the orphanages in most need. Your gift today will save lives and bring hope.

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مكتبة الكحل

Sinn Fein MPs to challenge Speaker's ruling

By NICHOLAS WATT
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

GERRY ADAMS and Martin McGuinness are to challenge the Speaker in Europe after she confirmed her decision to ban them from the Palace of Westminster.

After a 30-minute meeting with Betty Boothroyd yesterday, Sinn Fein's two MPs denounced her ruling as "undemocratic" and vowed to take their case to the European Court of Justice.

Miss Boothroyd vigorously defended her decision, saying that Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness had excluded themselves from the Commons by refusing to swear the oath of allegiance to the Queen. In a statement to the Commons, she said that they were demanding "associate membership" of the House. "Such a status does not exist. There is no halfway house."

Two weeks after the general election, Ms Boothroyd barred Mr Adams, the MP for West Belfast, and Mr McGuinness, the MP for Mid-Ulster, from using Commons facilities because they refused to take up their seats. Sinn Fein MPs have always refused to swear the oath of allegiance because they reject British jurisdiction over Northern Ireland. But during the election campaign Mr Adams declared a new policy of "active abstentionism", saying that he would decline to take his seat but would use the office facilities at Westminster.

Miss Boothroyd, who met Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness in her office, told the Commons that she had listened carefully to their arguments. But swearing the oath was a legal requirement that



Boothroyd: confirmed ban on the two MPs

could not be set aside by "whim or any administrative action". She said: "Those who choose not to take their seats should not have access to the benefits and facilities available in the House without also taking up their responsibilities as Members and participating in the democratic process."

The Speaker denied that she was discriminating against Sinn Fein and said that the Parliamentary Oaths Act could only be changed by primary legislation. She reminded MPs that Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness were free to use stationery and postage, which would let them take up issues on behalf of their constituents. The Labour leftwinger Tony Benn called for a debate on her ruling, but she rejected his demand.

As Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness arrived at the Palace of Westminster, they were cheered by a crowd of Sinn Fein supporters waving tricolours. After their meeting with Miss Boothroyd, Mr Adams said that it was absurd to bar him from the Commons when he is to be allowed to meet the Prime Minister in

Downing Street next week. "It's a strange absurdity of the way British democracy works. It shows once again that in relation to Ireland, British democracy doesn't work."

He condemned the Speaker's ruling as discriminatory and unjust. "It's part of the knee-jerk, old agenda at a time when that agenda was about marginalising and demonising people, about denying people their rights."

Later the Sinn Fein MPs won support from a Tory former Northern Ireland Minister. Peter Bottomley (Worthing West) said: "It should be possible for any elected MP to choose that they affirm that they will abide by the democratic process and enable them to take their seats. We cannot expect republicans to have falsely to swear allegiance to the monarch."

Letters, page 25



Gerry Adams, centre, and Martin McGuinness being welcomed by supporters as they arrived for their meeting with the Speaker yesterday

'People's Lottery' plans unveiled

By ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PLANS for a so-called People's Lottery to raise £1 billion a year for the health service, schools, and the environment were published yesterday.

A sixth good cause, a New Opportunities Fund, will be created by the National Lottery Bill, which will also establish a new trust, Nesta, to promote talent in science, technology and the arts. Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, said that the aim was to create a "People's Lottery" to reflect the aspirations of those who played it.

But the Tories criticised the Government for raiding the lottery fund to pay for services which they said should be provided by the taxpayer. They claimed that the National Lottery was being misused. Francis Maude, the Shadow Culture Secretary, said: "It will no longer be the National Lottery but the Government's lottery."

Mr Smith said: "The majority of adults play the lottery and want to see the money it

generates spent on a wider range of things that matter to them. I agree - it should, and now it will."

The Bill, which will begin its parliamentary stages in the House of Lords later this month, will allow the good causes for the first time to solicit applications. To reduce bureaucracy, it will create one-stop shops for grant applications from community groups. The lottery regular, Oflot, will also be given the power for the first time to fine the operator, Camelot, for breaches of its licence agreement.

However, the Government has backed down from imposing a non-profit condition, which has been advocated by the businessman Richard Branson, and which was part of Labour's manifesto commitment that a non-profit lottery was still the wish of the Government but it would not happen at the earliest until Camelot's licence had expired in 2001.

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THE TIMES FRIDAY DECEMBER 5 1997

OVERSEAS NEWS 17

Corporate wife wins \$20m in divorce

America is split over whether staying at home is a sacrifice, Bronwen Maddox reports

LORNA WENDT and her husband Gary were both claiming victory last night in a divorce case watched across America as a test of the value of the corporate wife. Mrs Wendt, 54, turned down \$10 million (£6 million) to fight for \$50 million, and got \$20 million.

The divorce suit brought an end to the Wendts' 31-year marriage was that legal rarity: a top-dollar case which went to trial rather than settlement. But the nation has also split over the question of whether, if a wife stays home, it is her sacrifice or his loss of a second income.

Despite Mr Wendt's vehement claims of victory, Wednesday's ruling by a Connecticut judge is widely seen as shattering a "glass ceiling" where divorced wives could expect to get only what they "needed", instead giving them what they have "earned".

The Wendt saga has struck chords nationally, partly because it is the tale of a couple who followed the American Dream from a small Midwest town to become millionaires. Mr Wendt, 55, is the head of GE Capital, which makes about a third of the profits of General Electric, the aero engines-toasters giant.

The couple were originally high-school sweethearts from Rio, a Wisconsin community of 700 people. He was a popular sports star and played the trombone in the band; Lorna, the daughter of a minister, played the oboe. When they married, they had just \$2,500. Mr Wendt went to

Harvard Business School, while Lorna worked as a music teacher, earning a "PFT" certificate — "putting hubby through" — from the Harvard Dean's wife.

Mr Wendt moved the family several times, to Houston, Atlanta, then Coral Gables, Florida, before settling in Stamford, Connecticut. According to Mrs Wendt, she raised their two daughters, now in their late twenties, and as the family moved, took charge of packing up and selling their houses and giving away their pets.

As Mr Wendt's star rose, she was hostess for black-tie dinners for 90 at their house, making small talk with impor-

tant foreign guests. She says that less than two weeks after she gave birth to the couple's first child, her husband's secretary called to say he wanted her to hold a dinner party for 12 that evening at their home.

Her former husband says this picture is a myth and that she refused to have parties at home except the company Christmas party. He spoke of his "dreadful unhappiness" at home, which led the couple to seek marriage counselling three times in the past decade.

Two years ago, when the marriage broke down, he says he offered his wife \$11 million, half his assets, then. She rejected it, forcing a public trial. In her view, the marriage was an "economic partnership" to which she contributed half. Her husband's view is that "I've worked hard. She didn't." He has also said: "Do feminists now want equality without effort? Is that the new equality?"

After this week's ruling, Mrs Wendt will get a package estimated at \$20 million. It includes two houses, and half the couple's cash and shares, half the dividends from her husband's GE shares, and \$252,000 a year in alimony. She will also keep two memberships to exclusive private clubs, and a Macy's department store credit card, giving

her a 45 per cent lifetime discount.

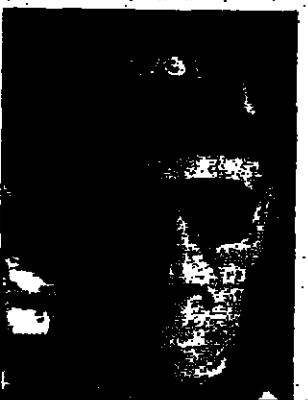
Most controversially, given the corporate fashion for locking in top staff with share options, she will also get more than a quarter of her former husband's future stock options and retirement bonus. Her husband contested this, saying that this money depended on his future hard work.

She claims victory on the ground that the award recognises her value. Her spending averaged \$120,000 a year for clothing, \$5,000 a month for travel and \$1,350 a month for make-up and hair.

The exact reasoning of Judge Kevin Tierney is not yet public: he has released only 25 pages of a 465-page opinion. Nor will the case set a legal precedent unless it goes to appeal. But it will still be studied because it appears to set aside time-honoured principles of divorce awards.

In Connecticut, like many other states, assets are subject to "equitable distribution", normally meaning a 50-50 split, but when tens of millions of dollars are involved, most judges rule that "enough is enough": anyone should be able to live on several million dollars.

Mrs Wendt now plans to develop her recently created Foundation for Equality in Marriage. Her former husband says he has "found true happiness" with Rosemarie Adams, a divorced 64-year-old grandmother. He plans to marry his new partner — provided that she signs a pre-nuptial agreement.



Gary Wendt rejected "equality without effort"



Lorna Wendt leaves court in Stamford, Connecticut, after the divorce hearing

Gamble cost the Getty Trust \$400m

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

ONE of the world's richest art endowments, the Getty Trust, has admitted losing nearly \$400 million (£240 million) in a single year because of a bad guess on the way the stock market would go.

Fearing a market plunge in the 1995-96 financial year, the fund's trustees invested heavily in complex stock-index options designed to pay off if share prices fell. When they roared ahead instead, the defence mechanism cost the trust \$397.2 million.

The revelation of this backfire in over-cautious investment tactics comes days before the opening of a vast new \$1 billion Getty museum and art institute on nearly 600 acres overlooking Los Angeles. The new Getty Centre's original budget of \$360 million has ballooned over the ten years it has taken to design and build.

Combined with costly recent art-buying sprees and the investment losses announced in the Los Angeles Times yesterday, the huge construction project has eroded the trust's image of having limitless wealth.

Founded with the \$1.2 billion oil fortune left by J. Paul Getty on his death in 1976, the trust rode out successive bull markets in the 1980s and early 1990s to stand at over \$4 billion by mid-1995. Then John Whitehead, a trustee and former investment banker, advised "hedging" against a market crash.

The strategy was implemented by three Wall Street banks including one, Goldman Sachs and Co, at which Mr Whitehead had been co-chairman. When it failed it cost the trust a dollar for every dollar its portfolio gained during the 1995-96 market surge.

Mr Whitehead this week defended his tactics, likening them to buying a life insurance policy without actually wanting to die. But, when one of his successors was asked if such a tactic would be tried again, he said: "Not in my lifetime."

Disney chief's \$565m payday record

BY GILES WHITTELL

THE chairman of the Walt Disney Company has cashed in accumulated bonuses worth more than half a billion dollars — a landmark in American corporate history.

Breaking all records for the single biggest executive payday, Michael Eisner, a combative studio chief with a degree in English literature, sold a tranche of eight-year-old Disney stock options at an estimated profit of \$565 million (£353 million).

In an exquisite piece of understatement, Mr Eisner acknowledged through his press office that the deal "will undoubtedly provoke much discussion".

A similar transaction five years ago, in which he realised \$202 million of shares, triggered indignant comment about US boardroom earnings — not least from Disney theme park employees on little more than the minimum wage.

In the deal announced on Wednesday, Mr Eisner bought 7.3 million shares at heavily deflated prices, set in his contract in 1989, at less than \$20 per share, and sold 5.4 million of them at the day's market rate of \$95 a share.

Such deferred stock options have become a standard incentive in top executives' pay packages, since they can prove wildly profitable if the company performs well but worthless if it falters.

Mr Eisner's salary has been fixed at \$750,000 a year since he arrived at the company from Paramount Pictures. He is thought to have earned about \$1 billion while at Disney, and in addition has a stake in the company now worth around \$542 million.

Spread over the nine years during which they matured, the options sold on Wednesday amounted to a daily wage for Mr Eisner of around £100,000.

Congress blunder drives India to unwanted election

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT

INDIA faces an exhausting, expensive and unwanted general election — the second in less than two years — after President Narayanan dissolved parliament yesterday. It will be a pointless poll, the consequence of a blunder that marks yet another low point in the state of politics.

The Congress party, which has governed India for most of its 50 years of independence, brought down the United Front coalition, believing it could lead a new multi-

party administration, pieced together from the old one. But almost no party would join — a sign of how low the reputation of Congress has sunk.

There have been three governments since the last elections 18 months ago, one of which lasted just 13 days, and there is no prospect that the new polls will produce anything less chaotic than those of May 1996. Congress, rarely treated to such grassroots contempt, is plainly incapable of getting anything like a majority in the Lok Sabha (lower house), ensuring India remains in the unfamiliar and unstable territory of

coalition politics. The rise of regional parties, based often on linguistic affinities, has been matched by a phenomenal increase in support for the hardline Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has blood on its hands from anti-Muslim riots. It also played a central role in the 1992 destruction of the 16th-century Babri mosque by Hindu fanatics in Ayodhya.

The polls will be held early next year, probably in February. Sitaram Kesri, the 83-year-old leader of Congress, almost single-handedly topped the Government on the pretext

that it included a Tamil party implicated in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister. His miscalculation is one of the great political blunders of modern India.

He had hoped enough members of the 14-party United Front coalition would defect to him to form a new administration, but he underestimated how loathed Congress has become over its destructive bids for power.

The electorate will doubtless punish his party severely. The biggest beneficiary is likely to be the BJP, which is comparatively disciplined

and articulates a nationalist philosophy that appeals to many Hindus. But it includes extremist elements that threaten the fragile relationship between Hindus and India's 130 million Muslims.

All the prime ministerial candidates have blood or corruption on their hands, presenting India's 980 million people with an unsavoury selection. The political upheaval means the business of government is now on hold, with devastating consequences for the economy and, indirectly, the 450 million Indians who live in poverty.

Rwanda troops chase Hutu prison escapers

FROM DAVID ORR IN NAIROBI

THE Rwandan Army said yesterday that it had engaged Hutu rebels in heavy fighting after they freed some 500 inmates of a prison in central Rwanda on Wednesday. Four police guards and six civilians died in the prison raid by 300 armed guerrillas.

It is not known how many died when the army struck back, but the death toll could be high. The Rwandan Patriotic Army, dominated by minority Tutsis, is gaining increasing notoriety for the brutality of its counter-insurgency operations. Hundreds of unarmed civilians, mostly Hutus, are being killed

every month in army swoops in the hills where rebels are believed to have their bases.

The escapes from the prison in central Gikoma province were members of the Hutu majority detained on suspicion of involvement in the 1994 genocide, which claimed the lives of at least half a million people.

This latest rebel attack points to a growing confidence on the part of Hutu extremists bent on overthrowing the largely Tutsi Government. Never before have they struck so deep into the interior of the country. Since they were routed by an invading Tutsi force

after the genocide, the rebels have largely confined their activities to the traditional Hutu stronghold of the northwest.

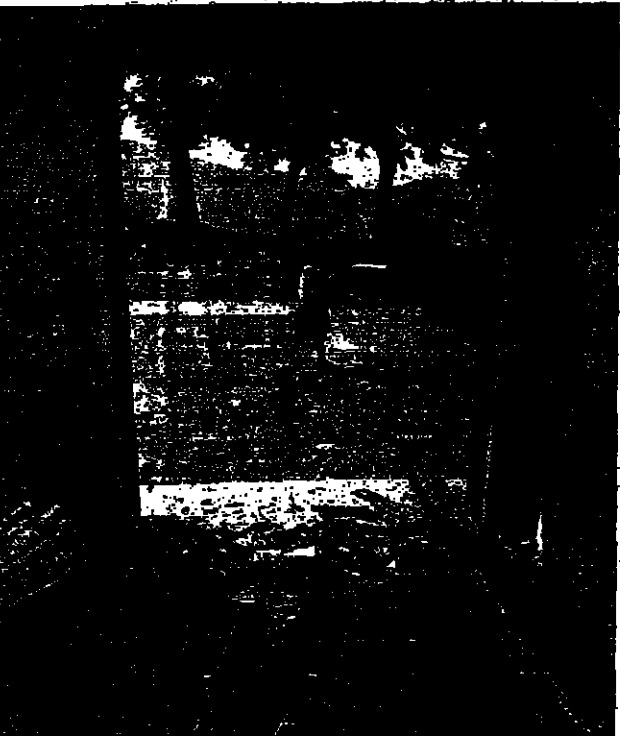
Wednesday's raid is the second assault on a detention centre this week. More than 100 prisoners were reported to have been freed in a rebel attack in northwestern Rwanda on Tuesday. Two weeks ago, some 300 people died when Hutu guerrillas took on government troops at a jail in Gisenyi in northwestern Rwanda. The army later said 88 prisoners had died in "crossfire" and that 93 inmates had escaped. The rebel death toll was put at 200.

Three and a half years after the genocide, Rwanda is still locked in a vicious cycle of murder and revenge. Hardly a day goes past without people dying violent deaths in the tiny central African nation.

The Government that came to power in 1994 hoped the Hutu extremists later known as Interahamwe had been dealt a fatal blow in the civil war that followed the genocide. Some were arrested but most fled to refugee camps in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo).

When the bulk of Rwandan Hutu refugees returned home late last year, so did many extremists. Still more returned from Congo this year, following the Rwandan-assisted overthrow of the late Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Again, arrests were made, pushing the already crowded Rwandan prison population to 120,000.

But, as the frequency and intensity of rebel attacks increased, it is clear the Interahamwe are far from vanquished.



A Rwandan boy passes burn-out administration offices after a Hutu attack near Kigali yesterday

Red Planet was once wet planet, says Nasa

BY BRONWEN MADDOX

MARS was at one time more like the Earth than we thought, according to new analysis of data from the Pathfinder mission, Nasa said yesterday.

reports published in the journal Science. The red planet's "rounded pebbles and cobbles and the abundant sand-sized dust-sized particles... all appear consistent with a water-rich planet that may be more Earth-like than previously recognised", according to the journal.

craft adds that Mars may have had "a warmer and wetter past" than previously recognised, "in which liquid water was stable and the atmosphere was thicker". The report appears to confirm the first impressions of Nasa, which aimed the Mars Global Surveyor satellite at Mars in 1996, when it was thought to be a "dead planet".

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Woody Allen's lost laugh at Nixon

By JAMES BONE

A NEW YORK television station has unearthed a never-aired 1971 TV film by Woody Allen lampooning President Richard Nixon and is seeking his permission to broadcast it. *Men of Crisis: the Harvey Wallinger Story* stars Allen as the top aide to President Nixon in a clear swipe at Dr Henry Kissinger, his Secretary of State. The 25-minute mock documentary juxtaposes Allen with a Nixon lookalike and uses news footage of bumbling politicians.

The fictional Wallinger got his PhD in needlework from Dr Kissinger's alma mater, Harvard University, and set a record by graduating 96th in a class of 95. Allen wrote the film in ten days and shot it for state-funded public television just in time to be shown for Nixon's triumphant re-election campaign — before Watergate. The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) shied away from broadcasting it, however, apparently because it feared the wrath of the thin-skinned Nixon.

William Baker, president of New York's public television station WNET, received a video-cassette from an executive who had worked on the film.

Iraq planned to bribe UN weapons team

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein of Iraq was convinced he could bribe most of the United Nations arms inspectors to turn a blind eye to his secret chemical and biological weapons programme, William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, disclosed yesterday.

However, the Iraqi leader realised he would not be able to buy the US and British officials, Mr Cohen said. Speaking at a joint press conference in London with George Robertson, his British counterpart, Mr Cohen warned Saddam that the confrontation between Iraq and the UN Special Commission (Unscm) responsible for weapons inspections was not over. "The crisis has been put on hold, not resolved," he said.

After thanking Britain for backing the United States by sending a military force to the Mediterranean for potential strike missions against Saddam's warfare facilities, Mr Cohen said a senior Iraqi military officer who had recently defected had given details of Saddam's plans for developing weapons of mass destruction.

The Iraqi defector, he said, had disclosed that Saddam planned to "hide, conceal and

secrete these weapons, that he was convinced Unscm was just a temporary nuisance and that they could be bought anyway".

Mr Cohen said Saddam believed "he could bribe the officials with the exception of the American and British".

"Fortunately, that's not the case, fortunately we have inspectors who are doing a heroic job and they are very professional," Mr Cohen said.

He felt it was his duty, he said, to keep telling everyone what the Iraqi leader was trying to achieve. "He has been lying from the very beginning. He denied he had any biological weapons programme but the inspection team discovered 2,100 gallons of anthrax, one spore of which could kill you after a few days," he said.

Mr Robertson made it clear that HMS *Invincible*, the aircraft carrier which was deployed from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean and is equipped with RAF Harrier GR7s as well as Navy Sea Harriers, would remain in the region for as long as it was necessary to maintain military pressure on Saddam.

Britain and the US were prepared to use military force

against Iraq if necessary to ensure unrestricted UN access to all facilities in the search for chemical and biological weapons, Mr Robertson and Mr Cohen said.

Mr Robertson said that, if Saddam continued to defy the UN, "he knows there are forces there from at least two countries, and probably from more, up against him".

Richard Butler, the Australian head of Unscm, is due to visit Baghdad next week and both Mr Cohen and Mr Robertson said he must be firm in demanding "unfettered" inspections for weapons of mass destruction.

"If he has nothing to fear, then he should have no objection to the UN inspectors going into these facilities," Mr Cohen said.

□ Iraq cleared: The International Atomic Energy Agency, based in Vienna, said yesterday that Baghdad did not resort to illegal nuclear activities between October 29 and November 20, after the UN inspectors had left the country.

The statement was issued as Iraq ranked Mr Butler among its "enemies" and said his mission to persuade Baghdad to open all sites to inspection was bound to fail.



John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*, which evolved from a piece of fiction

WORLD SUMMARY

Ecologist accused of killing

Paris A prominent elected official of the French Green Party was arrested early yesterday for allegedly stabbing to death his wife's 36-year-old lover in what was described as a classic and brutal crime passionnel (Ben Macintyre writes).

Alain Tredez, 49, a senior member of the regional council of northern France and a flamboyant ecology campaigner, was seized by police outside the home of his alleged victim in Dunkirk.

According to judicial sources, M Tredez appeared to have launched a frenzied attack on his rival, who has not been formally identified.

Italy ships more Albanians home

Rome Two Italian naval vessels ferried more than 400 Albanians across the Adriatic to their homeland while hundreds of others awaited deportation at airports and ports in southern Italy, after a decree for their expulsion which came into force on Sunday. Authorities were shutting down the last of the church shelters that have hosted some 17,000 Albanians who fled the turmoil in their homeland earlier this year. (AP)

Palme suspect may be retried

Stockholm Christer Pettersson, 50, who was convicted but later acquitted of the 1986 murder of Olof Palme, the Swedish Prime Minister, may face a new trial, according to reports here. New evidence makes it possible for the prosecution to ask the Supreme Court for a retrial. Palme's widow, Lisbeth, positively identified Pettersson as the killer. (Reuters)

Mother sent son to paedophile

Belfort A French mother, 36, was jailed for two years, one suspended, for prostituting her 14-year-old son. The paedophile to whom she sent him was given four years, one suspended. Paid between Fr30 (£3) and Fr50 for each visit, she said she "wanted to have a bit of money hidden away from my husband". (AFP)

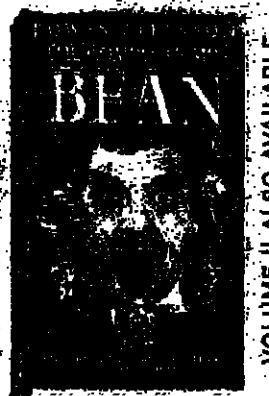
No-sleeping pills

Dhaka Taslim Uddin, 60, a businessman in Bangladesh with three wives and 13 children, has not slept for 13 years despite high doses of sedatives, a newspaper reported. Doctors said he seemed to have suffered no ill effects from his insomnia. (AFP)

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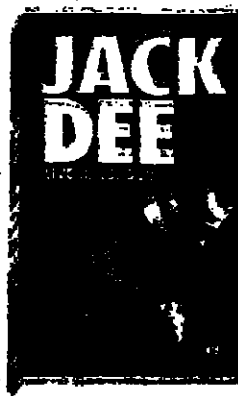
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Disco fever writer is staying a lie

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE British journalist who wrote the magazine article on New York's disco culture that became the film *Saturday Night Fever* has confessed that he made it up.

Nick Cohn said the character played by John Travolta in the 1977 film was a composite of a "Brooklyn disco-goer glimpsed in a doorway, a teenage gang member in his hometown, Derry, and Chris, a mod from London. "I faked it," Mr Cohn admits in a piece marking the twentieth anniversary of the movie in New York, the weekly in which the original article appeared.

"There was no excuse for it," he writes. "At the time, if cornered, I would doubtless have produced some high-flown waffle about Alternative Realities, tried to argue that writing didn't have to be true to be, at some level, real. But of course, I would have been full of it. I knew the rules of magazine reporting, and I knew that I was breaking

them. Bluntly put, I cheated."

The confession means that the *Saturday Night Fever* disco phenomenon, now popular among a new generation, is based on a journalistic myth. Travolta's hip-swinging character, in his white suit and open-necked black shirt, is a plain impostor.

Mr Cohn describes how he crossed the Atlantic after an energising spell in London in the 1960s to find New York pale by comparison. In need of an "energy fix" not available at the usual record company parties, he trawled the streets for colourful characters and came upon a black disco-dancer called Tu Sweet.

Acting as his guide, Tu Sweet took him to the now famous 2001 Odyssey disco in the Italian-American enclave of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.

Mr Cohn's piece was published under the heading "Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night." Soon, *Fever* mania set in.

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Holland ready to fill gaps in ranks with boy troops

FROM MARK FULLER IN AMSTERDAM

THE Dutch Army is considering recruiting 16-year-olds in a desperate attempt to fill ranks severely depleted by the abolition of conscription almost a year ago. The army is almost 25 per cent below its required strength.

Under human rights legislation, the youngsters would not be able to carry arms but could "practise with sticks" until they reached the legal minimum age of 17. Academic requirements would be lowered for the fast-reaction force, which contributes to Nato operations. Military command is also considering doubling the percentage of women soldiers to 12 per cent in a decade.

"The idea is to set up a college which would give the youngsters an education and a taste of the army, after which they could sign up fully," a spokesman for the AFMP soldiers' union said. "It would be done in partnership with the corporate sector, so recruits could get a civilian job after a couple of years."

The recruitment problem has been exacerbated by the military's shoddy image and low morale. Since Dutch troops were blamed for the fall of Srebrenica, Bosnia, in 1995, the military has been rocked by scandals involving gross misconduct.

This year soldiers have been found guilty of drug smuggling with one non-commissioned officer running an Ecstasy distribution ring from a base in Germany. A report in September revealed that Dutch officers taking part in a UN peacekeeping operation in Angola had sex with minors

and attempted to smuggle diamonds and marijuana. The army command was accused of turning a blind eye and did not report the misconduct.

However, attempts to tighten discipline in a military force to wear pony tails and earrings have largely misfired.

Plans to shorten hairstyles and smarten dress codes were ditched recently after the first victim of the new regime raised a wave of protest.

A new code of conduct for the army has also been lambasted as infantile. The eight-point charter, published in October, consists of a ban on drugs and the inordinate consumption of alcohol. It orders soldiers to respect all cultures and human rights, refrain from intimidation and "rumour-mongering and tit-for-tattle", and to help people in need whenever they can.

An army spokesman said the code, which would have to come into effect before the end of next year, was vital to achieve a fully professional military force by 2000.

"The Dutch Army is increasingly working within international crisis-management operations and humanitarian aid exercises. The whole world is watching. Dutch soldiers have to look professional and act professionally," he said.

To introduce the code, the army issued all its 35,000 personnel with a sheet of coloured stickers on which were printed the code text. The idea was that soldiers would exchange stickers to get a full set. The union said the code was "an insult to a soldier's intelligence".

Rift between islands widens as Nevis seeks independence

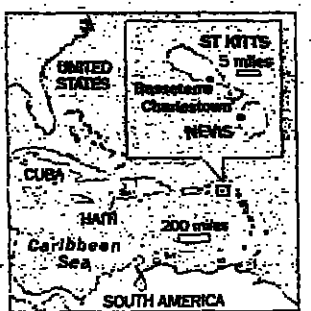
FROM DAVID ADAMS IN CHARLESTOWN, ST KITTS AND NEVIS

EVER since these two islands were joined by their British colonial masters more than 100 years ago, forming the smallest nation in this hemisphere, St Kitts and Nevis have never seen eye to eye.

Now Nevis is hoping to break away, after the island's five-member assembly voted last month to hold a referendum on independence.

Measuring only 36 square miles and with a population of barely 10,000, an independent Nevis would rank among the smallest countries in the world, second only to Vatican City and the phosphate-rich Pacific island of Nauru. "We might end up being the smallest country on earth, but at least the people will be free," said Kenneth Williams, editor and publisher of the local weekly newspaper, the *St. Kitts-Nevis Observer*. The referendum could be held as early as April.

While St Kitts has always



been the seat of government, from early colonial times it was Nevis that outshone its big brother. Nevisians have long grumbled that they get a raw deal from central government. "We are treated as second-class citizens," said Mark Brantley, 28, an Oxford-educated lawyer on Nevis. "There is a vast inequality of infrastructure."

In cricket, Nevis has produced a crop of international stars. Nevisians proudly claim a higher level of education and civic responsibility. The island boasts the highest number of churches per capita — one for every 200 inhabitants — in the Caribbean and is virtually crime-free, unlike St Kitts.

To keep itself afloat financially, Nevis, like other English-speaking islands in the Caribbean, is staking its future on tourism and off-shore finance. "Officials on St Kitts will not discuss how they would view relations after a secession. Any dismemberment of the state is not something you can be happy about," said Joseph Edmeade, the central government's Chief of Staff. "But we are not going around in sackcloth."

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Ira Einhorn, right, in a Bordeaux court for his extradition appeal, talks to his lawyer, Dominique Delthil

French court frees fugitive killer in rebuff to America

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

IRA EINHORN, the former hippy guru and convicted murderer who has evaded American justice for two decades, was set free yesterday after an appeal court in Bordeaux refused to extradite him to America to serve a life sentence.

Einhorn, 57, faces a 1993 conviction in absentia for the murder of his girlfriend in 1977, but his lawyers successfully argued that he would be denied a retrial, as required under French law, if he were sent back.

After delaying a ruling for three months, the Bordeaux court ordered Einhorn's immediate release, in a rebuff to the American authorities who have hunted the fugitive since 1981 when he jumped bail and vanished. The chief prosecutor of Bordeaux has appealed against the verdict.

The burly, bearded Einhorn, who maintains his innocence, said "thank you" when the court delivered its long-awaited ruling. Immediately after the court hearing, Einhorn was summoned before another judge on charges

of using a false passport, illegally living in France under an alias.

The convicted killer could eventually be expelled from France for violating immigration rules, but in the meantime the only restriction on his movement is a legal order to remain in the Charente region of southwest France pending the inquiry into his residency status.

Einhorn's triumphant lawyers last night predicted that the convicted man would never be forced to return to America. "The United States has realised today, to its distress, that it still has lessons to learn from old Europe in the area of human rights," said Dominique Delthil, Einhorn's lawyer.

Einhorn was convicted of murdering his hippy girlfriend, Holly Maddux, whose body was found in his Philadelphia flat 18 months after the killing.

Having skipped bail, Einhorn fled to Europe and lived quietly, using various assumed names, in Britain, Scandinavia and Switzerland.

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SWINDON OPENS SATURDAY



JANE SHILLING GETS DRESSED

Time to put on a performance

There is a glorious moment in Pamela Brown's children's novel, *The Wish of the Curtain*, when the band of junior thespians hit a snag in their attempt to put on a play. The leading lady has to make an instant impact. She is magical, alluring, entrancing and so on, and she needs to dress the part. But there is only about half a crown in the kitty. Not enough to buy a single yard of silk or satin. What are they to do? The answer turns out to be... lining material. It's flimsy, it's dirt cheap and in natural light it looks thoroughly nasty. By night, however, under stage lighting, it is a different story. It acquires the glamorous, pale-blue lustre of a South Sea pearl. The dress — and the children's show — are a howling success.

There is a useful lesson here for anyone currently contemplating the prospect of a month of heavy partying, and it is one that contradicts all the normal rules of clothes-buying. Proper shoppers when considering a purchase ask themselves just two questions: do I really like it, and is it of superlative quality — beautiful material, lovingly made, carefully finished? If the answer to both questions is yes, then the sale is made. It may be eccentric, it may be last season's look. None of this matters. If the workmanship is good its time will come.

(In 1986 I bought, for a tenner, a pair of hand-stitched, real crocodile court shoes from Bruno Magli. They were old Seventies stock, with square toes and chunky six-inch heels, and they were so wildly out of fashion that they looked quite shocking. Everyone in the office thought me quite mad to waste ten pounds in this reckless fashion. But here we are, a decade later, and suddenly these same shoes are so cutting-edge it hurts. They emerged from the depths of the wardrobe to their long-awaited 15 minutes of fashion fame and admiring cries of "They're amazing. Where did you get them?" QED.)

But every rule has its exception, and party dresses are it. Though I suppose it depends a bit on what sort of party you intend going to. If you are planning to attend just one perfect, civilised soiree, then you might get away with just one perfect frock, hand-stitched by Sicilian nuns. (Though if it is the same perfect frock as last year, you may be sure that your young man's last girlfriend but one will side over and gush "Oh, you look wonderful. I've always loved that dress. It just goes on and on, doesn't it?")

If, on the other hand, you are thinking of spending from now until Epiphany racketeering from drinks to dinner to nightclubs to brunch, then you should tell yourself that what you are doing is not getting dressed in the ordinary sense, but putting on a performance. And so what you need are half a dozen little outfits that will make a brief but dazzling impact. And the place to look for these outfits is the high street, where they seem to turn around designer looks with greater speed, skill and economy. That crêpe column — is it Gucci, or Wallis? The beaded chiffon — Warehouse, or Ferretti? In a dim light, with the champagne sparkling, believe me, no one will be able to tell — unless you decide to let them get close enough to examine the label.



'Tis the season to be jolly — and stunning

Nancy Bridgewater (left): Black lace dress with pink embroidery, £567 by Elspeth Gibson from a selection at Tokio, 309 Brompton Road SW3. 0171-823 7310. Black and pink feather headpiece, £150 by Dai Rees at Tokio. Black satin beaded ankle strap stiletto, £255 by Patrick Cox, 8 Synnors Street SW3. 0171-730 8504. Black silk velvet embossed scarf with beading, £180 from a selection at Snap Dragon, 247 Fulham Road SW3. 0171-376 8889

Millie Saunders (right): Red slip with roses, £150 from a selection by Bella Aura at Browns Focus, 38-39 South Molton Street W1. 0171-629 0666. Red snakeskin stiletto court shoe, £235 by Gina, 189 Sloane Street SW1. 0171 235 2932. Black sheer tights, £3.50 by Aristoc

Marika Chikheidze (below): Silver sequin dress with side slits, £35 by Etam from stores nationwide. 0171-437 5655. Crystal tiara, £165 by Erickson Beamon. Black velvet stiletto, £230 by Gucci, 33 Old Bond Street W1



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Hair: Flavian Abbas at Michaeljohn Management using Sebastian Products
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Take three girls, different budgets, and lots of party invitations. What dresses would they choose? Grace Bradberry finds out

A really great party dress can transform the month of December. Even if your social firmament doesn't sparkle very much, there is always one party where dressing up is *de rigueur*. Fashion pundits may recommend tuxedos, metallic trousers, clever combinations of camisoles and skirts — but there is nothing like the joy of throwing on one really stunning dress. As Dorothy Parker said: "Where's the man could ease the heart like a satin gown?" We asked three

consummate party girls — none of them models — to go out shopping, each with a particular budget in mind, and show off their spoils in the studio. Here they reveal their secrets.

Under £600: Nancy Bridgewater, 26, is a designer who is breaking into television. She chose an Elspeth Gibson embroidered dress. She spends the least of anyone on clothes — but fantasises about having a designer budget. "I've never really bought something spe-

cifically to go out in. Then I found this amazing bead dress by Elspeth Gibson, which I would definitely wear — if I could afford it. It's the kind of thing that would make a real impact."

Under £150: Millie Saunders, 24, PA to Chris Bailey, director of Jigsaw menswear, wears a red slip dress by Belle Aura. The woman behind Belle Aura is Deborah Anderson, a singer who began making handbags to pay the rent. She takes antique slips, dyes them using Dylon and adds beautiful silk flowers and velvets, making each dress a one-off. Nicole Kidman recently bought five in one go. Winona Ryder is another client.

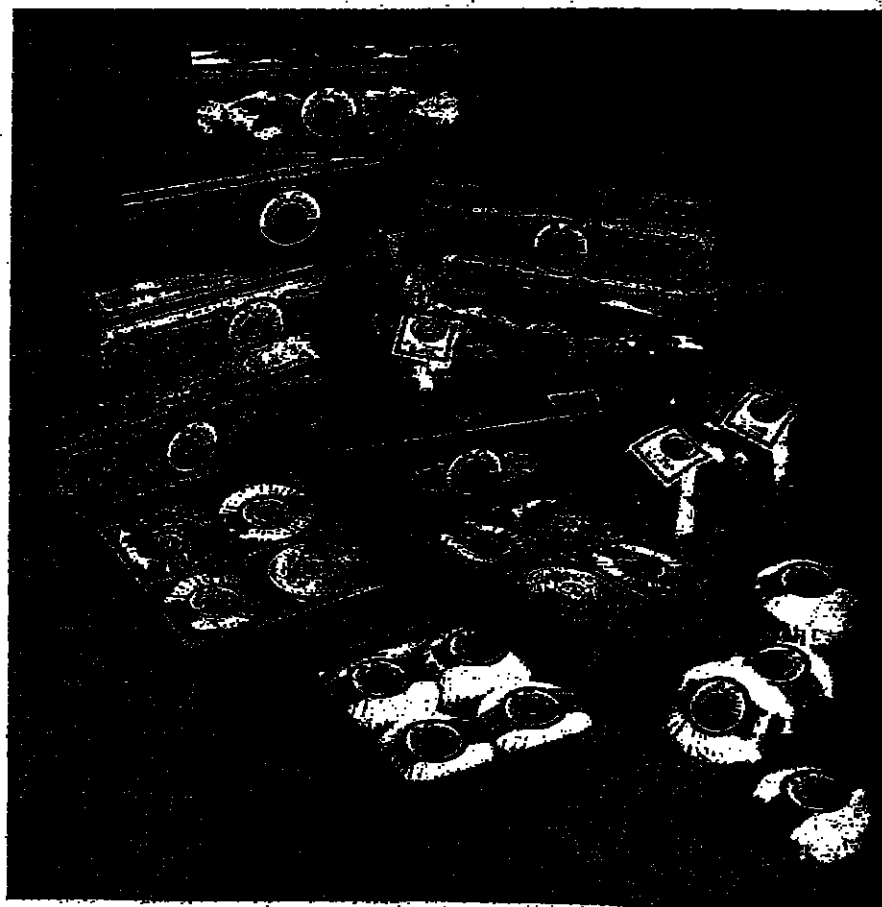
"I go to a lot of parties, some of them connected with work, and I tend to wear different things. I'd never heard of Belle Aura before, but I think this dress is a real find."

Under £50: Marika Chikheidze, 18, is reading history at King's College London. She lived in Moscow until she was 10, when her family moved to London. Her family takes clothes very seriously. "I'm going to two university balls before Christmas and a big new year do. I would definitely wear this Etam dress, and it's so cheap."



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'I was threatened with a baseball bat in front of my children'

It's Christmas and thousands will be borrowing from loan sharks. Bill Frost talks to somebody who did

There was a time when the drinks were always on Trevor; his generosity seemed as boundless as his spending power. He lavished every creature comfort on his family and treated himself regally, too: designer suits, a new Mercedes and regular weeks in Mallorca, playing golf with his friends.

The memory of those "golden days" is painful now as he sits chewing his nails, embarrassed that he cannot afford a half of bitter. He has chosen to meet in a pub "off the map", fearing recognition, humiliation or worse in his old West London haunts.

From enjoying an annual salary of almost six figures as both a building and market trader, Trevor has slid inexorably into crippling debt and the clutches of loan sharks — one a member of his extended family. He owes about £18,000 to various legitimate creditors and an undisclosed sum to the others.

As Christmas approaches, tens of thousands of people will be seeking out loan sharks, too — traditionally, business booms at this time of year. However, temporary relief from poverty comes at a very high price, as Trevor knows only too well.

"I suppose my lowest point came last Christmas when my cousin threatened me with a baseball bat in front of my children after I fell behind in my payments. He prodded me in the gut a few times and smacked me round the face."

"I wasn't frightened — just humiliated in front of my family, and that's a lot worse. My wife came home as he was leaving and knew something

was up. She wanted to kill Howard, my cousin. I felt such shame that I wanted to die."

Trevor, 35, has the beaten and furtive look of a man who has lost all self-respect. His nails are bitten to the quick and his fingers are stained brown by tobacco.

"I never really smoked before, now it's my lifeline, a necessity not a luxury. My Mum gives me a fiver a day to live on — can you imagine how that feels after all I once had?"

Financial ruin crept up slowly — he was not aware how tightly he had become ensnared in debt until the county court summons for non-payment of council tax arrived. Then there were the bailiffs and the threatening calls.

His troubles began 18 months ago when building work began to dry up and Trevor "couldn't be arsed to go out looking for more". His fruit and vegetable stall was failing, too.

"I was sitting on a pile of money though, so I didn't worry too much. I could make the mortgage repayments of £700 a month out of my capital, or so I thought."

However, the bills began to pile up and Trevor left the envelopes unopened. Final demands arrived and then letters threatening legal action. "The few I did read made me worried sick, so I just gave up. It got to the point where I felt ill in the morning when I heard the letterbox rattle."

"I just pulled the duvet over my head and tried to go back to sleep. When my wife Cheryl asked, I told her that I would settle all the bills the following week — for a while that satisfied her."

Meanwhile, Trevor was



Traditionally, business booms for loan sharks at this time of year. However, relief from poverty comes at a very high price

"still spending for Britain": a mountain bike for his ten-year-old son, Stephen, on the day a summons arrived, and designer clothes for his daughter, Gina.

"I knew it was crazy, but thought my luck was bound to change. I had begun to drink a bit, too — it seemed to take the worry away."

After a furious argument with his wife, sparked by a sales assistant's refusal to accept her storecard, Trevor made a determined effort. He opened his bills and paid those he could.

"I felt better for a couple of weeks and the arguments stopped. But we were still going out to dinner and living as we had before — of course, I

see now it was madness, but we needed to escape."

Inevitably, the bills piled up once more, and Trevor grew increasingly desperate and sought advice from a distant cousin who dealt in second-hand cars and lent money.

"He offered me a couple of grand but didn't say anything about the interest rate, which was about 1,000 per cent. Like the drowning man, I was ready to grab at anything."

Trevor defaulted on Howard's loan after three repayments. His cousin began making threats immediately. "I couldn't believe what I was hearing — I was frightened for myself and the family. My only option was to borrow off someone else to pay him."

By last autumn, Trevor had sold his car, his goldfish and even the children's televisions, to pay off the second loan shark. He put his home on the market and found part-time work as a plumber's mate. Meanwhile, his relationship with Cheryl was deteriorating.

By Christmas, Trevor was in despair — there were no presents, no tree, no turkey. He was two repayments behind and Howard had promised him a "good hiding".

Two days after being threatened with a baseball bat by his cousin, Trevor came home to a note from Cheryl saying she was taking the children to her mother's and he should not contact them. That night he spent his last £20 on alcohol.

"That was the worst Christmas of my life. I don't think I've ever felt lower. I wanted to go round to my Mum's but felt too ashamed. I think I was close to suicide."

"Debt had destroyed me personally and my relationship with Cheryl. And it had taken away the children's respect for their father."

In February Trevor found a buyer for his house. Cash for odd building jobs and "a few big wins on the horses" had enabled him to keep Howard at bay.

With the small profit from the sale of his house, he paid off his cousin and invested in a friend's business. At first, the venture went well. However, within a couple of months profit had become loss and Trevor was back in debt.

"I suppose you can predict the rest — of course, I went back to the loan sharks. It's not big money this time though: I can handle the repayments without a wife and family to support."

His confidence that "things will come good soon", echoed by fictional debtors featured in Sunday's BBC2 drama *Bumping The Odds*, is clearly misplaced. Trevor knows that life has cast him as a victim.

Rob Rohrer, director of *Bumping The Odds*, knows the Trevors of this world very well. Having made a documentary about loan sharks four years ago, he has nothing but sympathy for their victims.

"My film is drama based on the experience of making a documentary. The stories we tell are typical and very distressing. When you go to a loan shark you open the door on organised crime and violence. It's a trap from which there is no escape."

Trevor is only too well aware of lost self-esteem — before leaving, he asks for a contribution towards his tube fare. His shame is palpable.

When we speak, Howard

Men behaving like girllies

Somewhere along the line, men appear to have lost the plot, says Penny Wark

Alan Schubert will not thank me for saying a bit of a girllie. Desperate he may have been when he took a pair of scissors to £4,000 worth of his lover's clothes (she had been indulging in a touch of duplicitous behaviour, it seems) but what he didn't think through was how he would appear to the outside world afterwards. Which, in my view, is not avenged or powerful — but distinctly wet.

Meticulously executed revenge is girllie stuff. Remember Pamela Bordes disposing of the crotchets in Andrew Neil's suits, and Lady Sarah Moon distributing her erring husband's best daret to the neighbours? Quite. When men are unfaithful, this is what women do and they do not, please note Mr Schubert, fold up wrecked clothes afterwards. This looks like a pathetic gesture of apology which cancels out the malice he surely felt.

Mr Schubert's desperate act came to public view when he was hauled up before the beak in Norwich to plead guilty to criminal damage. He was not aware of the value of the clothes owned by his lover, Susan Lawrence, a clothes shop manageress with easy access to designer labels, and, as he protested: "I did not use violence... like other people have done. That was the only way I could get back at her for hurting me."

How very new man, how very politically correct and how pleased we are that he did not punch anyone on the nose. Yet still, I fear, Mr Schubert has made a significant misjudgment. For a man to ape the more subtle of the female's tactics may be the ultimate example of girllie power but it is also weirdly emasculating. Blame Susan Lawrence's damaged coat

women, if you must, but it seems that men are beginning to lose the plot.

Over the past 25 years they have embraced nappy-changing, learnt to cook and joyfully taken over the dishwasher, while we have marched out to work and built careers.

They can probably just about cope with the mechanics of all that but what really bamboozles them is the emotional stuff. Here we are asking them to activate their sensitive bits and they think that means being girllies.

You can understand their predicament. Last Saturday a young female relative subjected me to *An Audience with the (ghastly) Spice Girls* and I was appalled to see the ritual humiliation of

EASTERN EVENING NEWS



Susan Lawrence's damaged coat

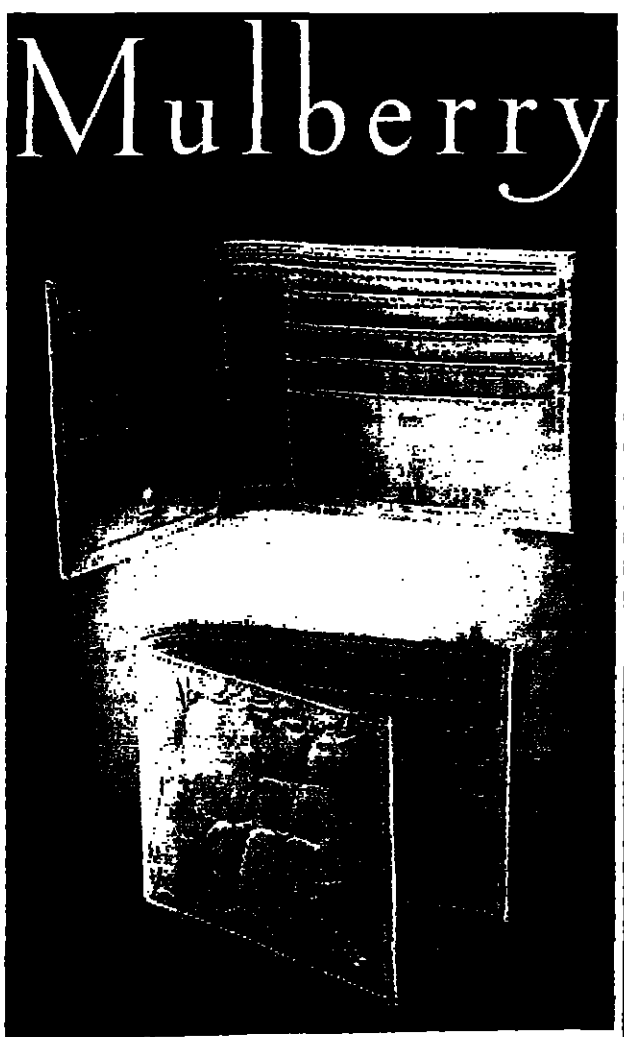
the half a dozen token men allowed to take part. If Jonathan Ross and his friends had any sense they would have stayed at home, poured a beer and turned on the sports channel.

What men must understand is that we don't want them to join in every sisterly activity. They don't have to be subjected to every last drop of gossip or endure every shopping trip, and in return they can continue to lie on the floor in darkened rooms watching all the cricket and footie they can find. I know this is confusing but we do actually like it when they are manly and do the old hunter-gatherer-protector bit. The rules have become bewildering, I know, but that's the way they are. Sorry.

MEDIA

Auntie's bloomers are such bad news. Michael Leapman on why technical hitches have undermined confidence in News 24 — the BBC's all-news cable station

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Holistic medicine for the excluded

John Lloyd says Mandelson's unit heralds a revolution in government

One "challenge above all others" will be met next week: the most important innovation Labour has made in government will be unveiled. That challenge must be overcome, that innovation must be seen to work, before Labour "can deserve another historic victory". Could the stakes be higher?

The speech from which those quotations were taken was made in the dog days of August by Peter Mandelson, the Minister without Portfolio. The challenge he raised was that of social exclusion. This is what the Government calls the poor or the underclass, preferring the longer phrase because it believes it better describes a condition that is less a product of lack of money or socio-economic position than of exclusion from the networks which provide jobs, support, and sociability.

It was seen — naturally — as a gambit to attract party support for the seat he then covered on Labour's National Executive Committee: what, after all, has Mr Mandelson to do with the socially excluded, or they with Mr Mandelson? It was meant to serve ambition, what senior politician's speech is not? But the words remain on record, enshrined, indeed, in a Fabian pamphlet — long after the gambit failed. A person of the stature of the Minister without Portfolio has pledged that success in overcoming social exclusion is a condition of winning the next election.

He also said that the medium through which this modern scourge is to be tackled — a Social Exclusion Unit, working within the Cabinet Office directly to the Prime Minister — would be up and running by September. It did not happen; but the unit has been coming together for the past month, and will be formally announced early next week. The delay was due to the time needed to assemble the dozen high-flying civil servants and voluntary sector executives who are its staff. But if the time taken was due to bureaucratic hurdles, the aim of the unit is to slash bureaucracy — even to revolutionise government. Mr Mandelson was right: this will be — if it works — the most important innovation Labour introduces into government.

The task itself is not so much vast as system-challenging. What we know of the socially excluded — and they are much studied — points to families and individuals for whom the very workings of the modern world militate against their inclusion. Unable or unwilling to educate themselves, they do not know how to read the increasingly intricate instructions to contemporary life. Unlike their predecessors, the poor, they have narcotics — the legal kinds which come via the screen in the corner of the room, the illegal kind which are bought in the alley. These keep them quiet, but further deepens their exclusion.

To reach and "include" these people while simultaneously furthering and celebrating the forces which exclude them will take some doing. But the unit's brief is only part of its broader purpose. It is explicitly meant to be a prototype for a re-invention of government. Those who are designing the unit believe that it will succeed

in its first aim of inclusion only if it succeeds in its secondary aim of deconstructing, then reconstructing, Whitehall.

What is being proposed is nothing less than an end to the departmentalism which has its roots in the 19th century, and which has survived fundamentally unchanged to this day. It has for some time been a major strand of new Labour thinking that this no longer serves its purposes; that its radicalism and ambitions cannot be cramped within a Victorian corset, and that it must be ripped open.

Ripped open, to be replaced with something which has been given a name: "holistic government". The name is that of a pamphlet published by Demos, the most influential new Labour think-tank, whose founder Geoff Mulgan has a crucial role at the Downing Street policy unit. Demos defines as holistic an administration which deals with issues in the round rather than through dozens of separate agencies and departments.

The idea is that the families and individuals who constitute the excluded are "consumers" of subsidies, services, and advice. The case workers who now guard the portals of the agencies set up to minister to the excluded would be liberated to shape the packages they need to gain inclusion again. By purchasing services across departments, such packages should be more or less individualised solutions to individual problems. Instead of trying to "cure" social exclusion, the State should concentrate on preventing it.

The fragmented and feudal nature of government departments — which enforces turf wars, ownership of clients and ministerial competitiveness — is hostile to this project. The Social Exclusion Unit is designed to destroy this feudal culture. Its civil servants are taken from a variety of departments. Within each department, a minister below Cabinet rank and a senior civil servant are assigned to the unit. The permanent secretaries' group on social exclusion, set up on an ad hoc basis under the previous Government, continues to meet. At the apex of this structure sits the Prime Minister, to whom the unit reports. Tony Blair said of it last week that it was "in many ways the defining difference between ourselves and the previous administration".

If the unit works, it works twice. It includes the excluded, and excludes the excluded. It erects a working model at the very heart of government of a new way of running the country. It is new Labour doing what it was born for. It will, if successful, stand as the answer to Roy Hattersley, who has kept up a withering fire on what he sees as the Government's empty pretensions to deal with poverty.

And it will, if successful, convince those of us who bought and still buy new Labour's economic claims that we were right: its failure would be disillusioning indeed — for the electorate too. It is in society's depths where new Labour will find its just desserts, or be denied them.

John Lloyd is associate editor of the New Statesman.



The price of Paddy's pact

On Monday this week the Liberal Democrats

46 Liberal Democrats elected in May were offered what was perhaps their best opportunity so far to embarrass the Government. And this would have been no mere opportunism. They had the chance to present an honest case consistent with their principles and passions.

The occasion was a debate on welfare. The Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, was twisting on the rack of an Opposition motion criticising her policies towards single parents, pensioners and the disabled.

Both the Conservative and Labour parties were on sticky ground. Ms Harman was, after all, implementing Tory policies running counter to the whole spirit of new Labour's covenant with the weakest in society. Ms Harman's argument — "single mothers want work, not benefit" — rang as false as Tory complaints on single mothers' behalf.

Harman faced mutiny from her own backbenchers. A third of Labour's parliamentary infantry had written protesting to the Chancellor. Journalists were alert. The whips had made strenuous efforts to scare dissenters off and drag into the chamber all the bootlickers they could find. The Labour benches were half-empty, and uneasy.

What an opportunity for Paddy Ashdown! As Harriet Harman rose at 3.38 with the front bench beside her tight-lipped, her backbenchers gagged and the official Opposition hobbled, there was only one party with the moral right and the weight of numbers to make a noise. Liberal Democrats are, by habit, the best speakers in the chamber. Now, with head and heart and in full throat, they could have created quite a fuss.

Three turned up. There was David Rendel, the Lib-Dem social security spokesman, plus two backbenchers: less than 7 percent of their party. The Tories numbered a little above 20; about 15 percent, and a similar proportion to the Parliamentary Labour Party's backbench showing. Later, other Lib Dems wandered in, at around the time the press were wandering out, the critical opening speeches — the time when the Government was embarrassed — having passed. When it came to the division, the party, headed by Paddy Ashdown, joined the Government in voting down the Opposition motion.

Call me a parliamentary anarchist, but I think that was significant. It does not really matter whether the big patch of empty green leather and the white space in the Hansard list of Ayes, where Liberal Democrats

Liberal Democrats are letting Labour off the hook — and betraying their principles

ought to have been, arose by mistake, misjudgment or design. You do not need to postulate conspiracy to conclude that our third party feels hesitant on the question of whether its role is to make serious trouble for this Government. However things may look outside Westminster and on the pollsters' charts, in the Commons chamber the Labour Party is an open goal and the Tories are injured players. This is the Lib Dems' big chance to score, and they haven't even got their boots on.

Nor do we speak only of gamesmanship. The Liberal Democrats' opportunity is more than tactical and arises from principle.

If I search my own imagination for what makes an MP, an activist or a core supporter a Liberal Democrat, the words liberty and compassion leap forward. That in practice these two ideas can pull in opposing directions is a contradiction with which liberals in every age and all parties have to wrestle. It subverts not a whit from their centrality within our third party's instincts. Liberals really do believe in individual freedom — that is why they did not become socialists. And they really do believe in the State's overriding duty to care for the weak. That is why they did not become Tories.

Liberty and compassion. And where does new Labour inspire the most profound unease? Not, surely, on the issue of competence. Blair, Brown, Mandelson and their team are eminently businesslike. Not on the grounds of economic prudence either: the healing of "old" Labour's greatest vulnerability is Brown's and Blair's greatest achievement.

Nor are they any longer open to the charge of dogma or extremism: new Labour is beautifully focused upon the centre: middle-class, middle-brow, middle-income, middling-opinion middle Britain. Crime is falling and Jack Straw impresses; the economy is strong; foreign policy seems in safe hands; education is the Prime Minister's "passion"; and on Europe Labour boxes clever.

So why do we shudder? Something about the new Government of "New Britain" chills. What is our unease? A suspicion, I suggest, that two sections

of new Labour's considerable canon are under-developed or shrunk: that part marked "liberty" and that part marked "compassion".

Mo Mowlam denies, and an alleged witness to the incident stoutly insists, that while Leader of the Opposition, Tony Blair remarked of homelessness that there were "no votes in it". Apocryphal or true, the story struck, and still strikes, a chord. Mr Straw's attack on beggars and squeegee merchants troubled in the same way. Recent claims that Humphrey the Downing Street cat had been cast out or poisoned were only jokes, but crickets did they strike a chord! Mr Blair's aides were forced to arrange a photo-opportunity at a secret location: to prove Humphrey was alive, and to promise that Mr and Mrs Blair planned to get another cat.

Mrs Blair even issued a statement. A certain lack of humanity is a serious weakness in the new Government's image. And the other big question concerns the party's attachment to liberty. In new Labour's collective imagination, the aims of the State may have altered, but the big stick is still firmly in its hands.

"Families cannot flourish unless government plays its distinctive role", said the 1997 Labour manifesto. Particular policies — on curfews, on a drugs "ban", homework, noisy neighbours, welfare, "capping" local authorities, tagging offenders, zero tolerance, gay servicemen, disident Euro-MPs, legal aid cuts, press freedom, "fast-track" punishment for young offenders, country sports — may each be defended on their particular merits but an overall impression arises that when Labour ministers sit around the Cabinet table to decide policy on any matter, the voice crying "individual liberty" is not strong. The image of the bully — Blair's mouthpiece, Alastair Campbell, seems to some to embody it — hovers above this Government.

You can hardly scan the examples above without noting that in almost every case the official Opposition is remarkably ill-placed to criticise. The flame of individual liberty does still burn in the Conservative Party, but in recent years has seemed to flicker

rather than flare. The flame of compassion, despite John Major, was never strong. Besides, 18 years in power robs any party of much of its capacity for credible indignation.

These few years, then, could be a season in which a reinvigorated and enlarged third party could push its roots deep and its branches wide. The soil is right, the air is right, the sun's angle is right for Liberal Democracy.

So where were those 43 missing Lib Dem MPs? I can account for a few of them, including the most important. They were at Downing Street with the Prime Minister, mingling with the Labour elite at the Special Cabinet Committee, discussing the commission appointed to study a new voting system.

This is not the place to examine the prospects and likelihoods for electoral reform. Suffice it to say that, though to hopeful Liberal Democrats the sky may seem the limit, there is a ceiling of toughened glass not many inches above this new commission.

If he moves from the status quo at all, Mr Blair can only offer a referendum on a half-loaf of electoral reform. I doubt whether he is prepared to put anything in place before the next general election. Nor is it certain that he can wheel his own troops into line behind the proposals to be put in any referendum. I reckon Mr Blair has not yet decided what he will do. He is not acting in bad faith, but nor is he above stringing Mr Ashdown along until the position becomes clearer.

In the meantime, Mr Ashdown is hopelessly compromised by Mr Blair. Even their gladiators' sparring at Prime Minister's Questions is now watched with the hooded eyes of an audience suspecting a fix. Tony Blair can honestly tell Paddy Ashdown that if his parliamentary party does anything seriously to destabilise Labour, Blair's own difficult task of whipping his troops into line behind voting reform would be made impossible.

So we can know almost beyond doubt that the more vulnerable Labour look in the Commons in years ahead, the more Mr Ashdown must keep his soldiers' swords sheathed. Can he? Is the Liberal Democrat Party in the Commons, in the Lords and in the country a brown paper package, tied up with string, deliverable into Mr Blair's lap? Is the Parliamentary Labour Party, similarly trussed, deliverable into Mr Ashdown's? These questions are more open than contemporary commentary imagines.

Blair's militant tendency

Beware Trotskyists of the Labour Right, warns Ken Jackson

It is sad that new Labour is in trouble over party funding. It needn't be. But it was inevitable, given the way in which Labour fundraisers have raised their collections under the noses of millionaires. For business does not invest in Labour out of altruism. Unlike trade unions, business expects a return. It is naive to believe the opposite.

That is not to say Labour should not work in partnership with business. My union, the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU), fought hard to turn Labour's clenched fist into a welcoming handshake. Partnership is the AEEU's philosophical beacon. I am glad that it is finally Labour's.

But let's not confuse partnership with fraternity. Business does not have the shared history and values enjoyed by both trade unions and the Labour Party. Business donates money to whichever party looks like winning. That is why those same businesses that now fund Labour once kept the Conservatives aloof.

Trade unions fund Labour because we know Labour is better for Britain. Unlike other donors, we do not have a list of demands, but seek to persuade Labour that our policy proposals are right for Britain. Unlike others, we do not have to bribe. So it is disappointing when trade unions are disowned.

Since 1979, unions have invested more than £200 million in Labour. My union alone has freely invested £20 million, with 700,000 members now paying the political levy. And while some business donors might not relish their help being revealed, unions are proud to do so. After all, our members vote for a political fund. We have no reason to be embarrassed by disclosure.

To look at Labour over the years, our donations might be seen as a bad investment. I would not agree. Without our money, new Labour would not be in office today. That is why we fought to lay new Labour's foundations, including one-member-one-vote and the expulsion of Militant.

But the debate over who funds the Labour Party is but one part of a wider project. A small but influential minority inside the Labour Party wants to take an axe to the party's roots. They seek a party without traditions and without foundation. Trade unions, local councillors, working people and, ultimately, party members themselves — all are superfluous to requirements. For these right-wing Trotskyists, new Labour is not about the Labour Party. It is about creating a new SDP.

And the process has begun. In recent weeks, Peter Mandelson, the Minister without Portfolio, took another swipe at trade unions, forgetting conveniently that he began his career at the TUC and was backed for his constituency by the GMB. Professionals have increasingly replaced ordinary working people as parliamentary candidates. Even the No 10 policy unit harbours those who once fought Labour, instead of fighting for reform from within. I am all for pluralism, but pluralism must not exclude those from ordinary backgrounds.

I want new Labour to succeed, as all sensible trade unionists do. It is not an aberration. The 1980s were the mistake in Labour's history. I support modernisation, but ordinary working people must be involved in the process. For without the broad base of union support, new Labour will become as unrepresentative now as it was in the past. We have thrown off the shackles of one minority. I do not want to have to fight another.

The idea that Labour could survive without trade union support, relying instead on state funding alone, is, again, rather naive. Union support is not simply financial. During the election, thousands of ordinary union members fought on the ground to return Labour candidates to Parliament. According to MORI, trade unionists have a 3 per cent higher turnout than the rest of the electorate. But it would be difficult to persuade my members to vote Labour if they had been kicked in the teeth by a minority who excluded their voice.

Ironically, the union link with Labour is not a burning political issue. During the general election, it did not appear on the doorsteps. It was not raised at the Labour Party conference. Support for the link is strong. At a recent event, I debated the link with a former researcher to Mr Mandelson. The audience of young moderate Labour Party activists did not agree that it is time to wave the brothers goodbye. Nor are unions across the world divorced from centre-left political parties. From the United States to Australia, trade unions both support and fund their political partners.

New Labour's anti-trade unionists, who share a complete lack of trade union experience, are misguided, self-absorbed and unrepresentative. If they do not like or understand the Labour Party, they should leave. They will not be missed. The Labour Party is not the SDP, and never will be. The offshoot failed, and new Labour would fail if it followed the same path. But I am sure the good sense of the leadership and ordinary party members will not let it happen.

The author is general secretary of the AEEU.

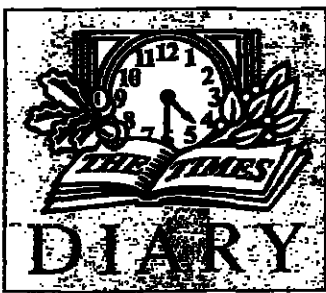
Boot boys

FOOTBALLERS at the House of Commons have signed a new coach: Mr Vincent Jones, the hard man of the FA Carling Premiership whose CV reads like a charge sheet. The Wimbledon midfielder has been offered the job of training Parliament FC — star player, one Tony Banks — and has graciously accepted. Vinnie, as he is known affectionately to aficionados of the once beautiful game, was approached by the Tory MP Nigel Evans to help the Commons team. "I told him the boys needed to harden up — we are a bit shy in the tackle," says Evans, a wheezy winger (he plays on the left). "We have a grudge match against the Sergeant at Arms next week. It got a bit heated last time and I thought he (Vinnie) would be the best man to prepare us." Mr Jones has had what the cheap prints might term a "colourful career". Since he was pictured gripping Paul Gascoigne's more thinking parts he has developed a full-blooded approach to the game. He has been sent off 12 times, was rebuked by the FA for making obscene gestures to fans, threw a bread roll at Gary Lineker and bit a sports reporter on the nose. Yesterday the reporter said he was suing the player for libel damages over comments made in the bloody aftermath.

Parliament FC is captained by the Labour MP Gerry Sutcliffe, who, until Vinnie muscled in, also doubled as coach. Their record isn't bad — played six, won three — but they have lost their dazzling centre forward, Phillip Oppenheim, who has become a restaurateur since losing his seat at the last election. Obviously, their first anniversary match will be played at Chelsea Hospital.



Banks and his gaffer, Vinnie



AMID all the coverage of the Covent Garden calamity, I was taken by the perceptive analysis of the Sun newspaper. In particular, by the byline of Brendan Murphy, billed as the journal's "opera correspondent". "I thought the editor meant Oprah Winfrey," protested Mr Murphy before making an astonishing disclosure. "I have been to the Royal Opera House on occasion. My favourite is La Bohème." Stack him.

Beefy stuff

TONY BLAIR has a penchant for Marmite sandwiches. This, I concede, is of limited global import except it proves the PM does have a feel for a Britain pre-polenta and

Caesar haircuts. Credit for this insight belongs to the winning Lauren Booth. Caesar's sister and new friend of Alan Clark, Sharon, she spoils it by calling Blair's election "the Versace revolution".

MINISTER in cross-dressing shocker. Or so my colleagues on the cheap prints might fashion my story. Charles McCreery, Ireland's Finance Minister, was preening himself in his office for Wednesday's Budget. He felt for the suit he had recently purchased from what passes for a decent tailor in Dublin. But when he lifted the bag, rather than finding his charcoal



grey three-piece number, he discovered a long slit skirt and a white lacy body. It belonged, I am assured, to his wife, who rushed round with a quieter ensemble.

Inside job

IT WOULD bring a smile to Howard Hunt, Watergate burglar. The Foreign Office is advertising for a British locksmith. He will spend much time "overseas carrying out repairs and maintenance on a wide range of security equipment and locks". The description also states that "as a member of a small specialist team the successful candidate will be expected to work unsupervised, and produce written reports". Candidates should "show a close affiliation with the UK". No need for a clean criminal record.

FIRST the management crisis, then the protocol crisis: the Royal Opera House had the Prince of Wales round yesterday to look over the work there. Mary Allen, chief executive, was to welcome him. But after the damning report calling for Allen to go, the Prince was met by a flunky in a hard hat. "It has been rather fluid all week," explains an insider.



IN a posthumous snub worthy of Hollywood, Bette Davis almost upstaged Ava Gardner (above) on her own birthday in her home town. The Ava Gardner Museum in North Carolina had planned to show The Great Sinner, to mark the 75th anniversary of the actress's birth.

But when the film arrived, it was a Bette Davis flick. The Gardner movie, of which there is only one copy, ended up in Hungary. The museum had to make do with Gardner's The Hucksters.

JASPER GERARD



FARMED OUT

A Government deaf to farmers' pain, blind to lawbreaking

When British lorry drivers were trapped by striking French hauliers earlier this year, Tony Blair flatly and rightly condemned the failure of the French Government and police to clear the country's roads for lawful trade and demanded full compensation. The Irish Government must thus have expected decisive British action from the moment, early last Monday morning, that Welsh farmers tipped 40 tonnes of Irish hamburger into the sea off Holyhead. The principle that grievances, however real, cannot justify criminal acts is just as valid in this case.

No such firmness has been displayed. Downing Street left it to the Welsh Office to "liaise" with the angry farmers; and the North Wales Police, inexcusably, allowed protesters onto the Holyhead dockside and stood by while they "inspected" and turned back more Irish loads. No wonder that the illegality has spread to Stranraer — where loads from Ulster were among those blocked — to Liverpool and now to Dover. Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, should not have waited until last night to tell farmers that they are not above the law; right from the start, farmers ought to have been told to expect arrest and stiff fines if they did anything that went beyond peaceful, unobstructive, demonstrations. Their grievances can be the subject of negotiation; their illegal conduct cannot be. If the explanation is that the Government is nervous that arrests would court public anger, given the fresh blow that its imminent ban on sales of beef on the bone has inflicted on a reeling industry, that is no excuse.

The farmers do have a point. It is not only beef producers who are having a dreadful winter. Every agricultural sector has been hit by the rise in sterling and consequent fall in the value of the "green pound", the notional unit pegged to other EU currencies in which European Union common agricultural policy subsidies are calculated. This has depressed farm incomes by between 25 and

40 per cent this year. After several highly profitable years, wealthy agro-industrialists can absorb the pain; but hill-farmers and other marginal producers, whose land barely provides a secure living at the best of times, are in genuinely grave trouble. It is no consolation to them that the roots of their predicament lie in the contorted, market-rigging machinery of the CAP. Many could go bankrupt long before the European Commission's proposals to switch from producer subsidies to direct income support — a badly needed reform which would expose rich farmers to market disciplines while freeing money for coherent rural strategies — have a chance of being agreed.

The Government should flatly refuse even to talk to them until these blockades end; but it should then listen more sympathetically than it seems disposed to do to the case for selective use of compensation. The Government has refused to draw down £980 million available to it from the EU contingency fund designed to cushion the impact of currency fluctuations. It argues that to do so would breach its spending limits, because the way that Britain's EU budget rebate is calculated means that only 29 per cent of this "free" cash and the rest would ultimately be paid by British taxpayers. But set against the £5 billion cost of handling the BSE crisis, this is small change. Beef farmers are hit from every angle; fatstock prices are on the floor, they face levies to pay for the £58 million cost of new hygiene standards and the cattle data base, and the seasonal boom in the beef market will inevitably be dented by the new ban. However slight the risk to health, the Government had no choice but to impose it; but it does have a choice about playing Scrooge with the EU fund. So long as this country has to live with a rotten EU common agricultural policy, it is unfair to British farmers to withhold the common palliative. To be deaf to distress but weak on crime is hardly enlightened leadership.

MORE FREE SCHOOLS

Watch the zones for education action

If there were any doubt that the Government was prepared to take on the educational establishment, the publication of yesterday's School Standards Bill should help to dispel it. There is much evidence of fresh thinking: the experiments of today could become the universal practice of tomorrow. And the extra accountability that the Secretary of State will impose on local education authorities (LEAs) and teacher training institutions — still the last bastion of producer interests — is excellent news for those worried about educational standards.

The Bill strengthens the powers of Ofsted, the inspection agency, against teacher training colleges. This should help to ensure that new teachers enter schools with a more rigorous approach and higher expectations of their pupils. It also allows the Education Secretary to crack down on bad LEAs, not just by taking them over, as he has done in Hackney, but also by insisting on contracting out — to the private sector or to another LEA — any service that is under par.

The logical extension of this is to give schools 100 per cent of their budgets, not 80 per cent as of now. They could then choose to buy their advice, meals, transport or any other service from the best provider available. If that happened to be the LEA, so be it. But forcing the local authorities to compete in an open market is the best way of leveraging up the quality of their services.

The only worrying aspect of this part of the Bill is the power it will give to LEAs to intervene in schools. This will be governed by a code of practice, which will allow such intervention only when a school gives cause for concern. Ministers must be strict with their drafting, for LEAs are desperate to have any chance to interfere. In some cases, they may be helpful — in others not.

TOAST TO THE NORTH

An appropriate moment to remember common bonds

The Norwegian Ambassador last night lit up the magnificent Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square, in a ceremony that since the Second World War has become one of the most celebrated and popular symbols of friendship between two countries. Every year, since its liberation from the Nazis, Norway has sent a vast Norwegian spruce to Britain as a token of thanks for British support during the years of occupation.

Although it has only four million people, Norway has long played a prominent role in British history and culture. Its kings and warriors visited our coasts; from the epic of Sir Patrick Spens to the Battle of Narvik. Britons have sailed to Nordic waters to wage battle or forge dynastic unions; and Ibsen, Munch and Grieg, three outstanding examples of Norwegian creative talent, still find acclaim in Britain. Norwegians come here in large numbers, to shop, to study and to enjoy our big cities. It sometimes seems as though half the Norwegian Cabinet has graduated from Newcastle University; and many a store in the North East looks forward to the weekend specials from Oslo.

Norwegians, however, are not the only big spenders from the north. Thousands of Icelanders are breaking all records in spenders that overshadow even the extravagance of wealthy visitors from Japan and the Middle East. Iceland's 250,000 hardy souls can now claim to spend more per head than any other

visitor to Britain. More than 50,000, twice the previous record, arrived last year to snap up bargains, enjoy our theatres and dine in our restaurants, each spending on average £99 per day — three times that spent by visitors from elsewhere.

They are doubly welcome — first because of their open-handed ways, and secondly because they bring with them some of the mystery of their faraway land of fire and ice. Britain and Iceland fought a war over cod. Since then, Iceland has grown immensely rich on the fruits of its cold seas. Iceland's standard of living, literacy rate and book production are among the highest in the world; its versatile people think nothing of holding three jobs at once. Few countries, with such bleak landscape and foul weather, can boast such good design, fine food, ancient literature and wild discs.

Other Nordic peoples flatter Britain by visiting us in winter. The festival of Finnish culture at London's Barbican, opened recently in the presence of the Queen and President Ahtisaari, is one of the largest and most exuberant displays of Finnish creative arts ever held outside Finland. That Finland chose to celebrate its 80th anniversary of independence in Britain is a mark of genuine friendship. Londoners can enjoy the exhibition, as well as the lights in Trafalgar Square. To Helsinki and Oslo, there is a warm message in return: thank you.

Anger over latest ban on beef

From Dr Mark Tremelling

Sir, I was surprised today to hear that the Government, in the interests of my own health and safety, have decided to ban me from eating my beef "off the bone" (reports and leading article, December 4). This, I believe, is due to the calculation that three out of more than two million cattle to be slaughtered next year for human consumption might have bones infected with the prion disease, BSE.

This risk is in itself remarkably small, certainly far smaller than the risk of being killed by some of the other potential hazards the Government has yet to outlaw in the interest of the nation's longevity, such as smoking, drinking alcohol or crossing the road.

Furthermore, it seems to assume that I will be far safer eating meat cut from the bone by some faceless slaughterhouse attendant than I would be had I performed the seemingly simple procedure myself. Whether or not one would have to actually devour the bones themselves or simply come into close contact with them has yet to be made clear.

Perhaps, in the light of this new information on bones as a reservoir for BSE, the ban should also be extended to encompass food products prepared for household pets, in an effort to prevent an outbreak of mad dogs, as well as Englishmen.

Yours faithfully,
MARK TREMELLING,
16 Archery Steps,
St George's Fields, W2,
December 4.

From Mr Roland Castro

Sir, The latest beef scare seems to indicate that we should be looking more closely at organic farming methods. Whilst this may be desirable in the long term, urgent measures need to be taken now. We should consider the following points:

1. Our methods of feeding cattle have come under suspicion. The Government and the public share the responsibility for pursuing cheap food, regardless of the cost to our health and the economy.
2. There seems to be a clear implication that many other countries are more successful in their raising methods. If this is so, then we should be informed of all the facts.
3. Modern methods of food production bring many other foods under suspicion. There is a lack of balance in harping so heavily on beef.

In the meantime, the Government could be more careful and constructive in its announcements: there is too much evidence of haste and panic. But if these events bring us closer to more sane and safe methods of food production, then we shall all benefit.

Yours faithfully,
ROLAND CASTRO,
3 Chester Close,
Chester Street, SW1,
December 4.

From Mr Philip Merricks

Sir, I am struck by the incongruity of tobacco, which is known to kill many thousands, being freely on sale, whilst beef on the bone, which might cause the additional death of one twentieth of one person next year, is banned. All to a background of TV and tabloid scare stories.

The Government has a clear and agreed duty to protect consumers. Which part of our staple diet should have its contents controlled — beef, cigarettes or the media?

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP MERRICKS,
The Manor,
Icklesham, Rye, East Sussex,
December 4.

From Mr David Hinks

Sir, From the figures given in your front-page report today, I calculate that one beef animal in 306,666 may have BSE, and in the time that British herds have had this problem, one person in 3,150,000 has died from the new variant of CJD.

This compares to one driver in 7,714 being involved in a road traffic accident on our diseased roads. I have only one thing to say: "Please, pass the horse-drawn sauce."

Yours faithfully,
D. HINCKS,
Normans Cross,
Forton, Chard, Somerset,
December 4.

From Mrs Susan Plummer

Sir, Whatever happened to freedom of choice? My family and I choose to eat roast rib of beef on a Sunday. It is not forced on us, it is our choice, so why not leave it to individuals to decide on their preferred cut of meat. Why should the Government tell me what I can eat?

Yours faithfully,
S. J. PLUMMER,
Lambourn Farm,
Plumpton, Sussex,
December 4.

From Mr Keith Su. Berrett

Sir, If only the British beef industry had had the foresight to sponsor Formula One.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH SU. BERRETT,
9 Reynolds Mews,
Wimslow, Cheshire,
December 3.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Hitting the right Royal Opera target

From Mr B. V. Strickland

Sir, A climate of crisis can be helpful to the process of introducing changes, and Mr Kaufman's report on the Royal Opera House will have been useful if it leads to calm and significant appointments. However, like you in today's leading article, I find his attacks on the recently appointed chief executive misplaced.

Surely, his real targets should have been previous ministers, Sir Angus Stirling, the previous chairman, and Sir Jeremy Isaacs, the previous chief executive, who presided over the disastrous decision-making process and presumably received knighthoods for doing so.

Knighthoods have been taken away for proven wrongdoing, so why not for incompetence?

Yours faithfully,
BEN STRICKLAND,
23 Juer Street, SW11,
December 4.

From Mrs Edwina Currie

Sir, Last night I attended a performance of Verdi's comic opera *Falstaff* by English National Opera. The Coliseum was packed, the audience enthusiastic, the music superb. The laudatory comments of your opera critic (Arts, November 17) amongst others were fully justified. Overall this was an evening of which any capital city could be proud.

School standards

From Mrs Elizabeth Bangs Jones

Sir, I was not at all surprised to read about the relative academic success of the pupils from Montserrat (leading article, December 1).

While we were teaching at a university in northern Cyprus, our oldest son went to the local Turkish infant school. It had no resources at all. Our son could speak only the most basic Turkish.

The desks were in serried ranks, the classrooms gloomy, the only posters on the wall of Atatürk and a 1950s family scene. Our son had to learn a Turkish poem by heart about twice a week and read a highly graded reading scheme (which had been in use for at least 30 years), though he did not understand most of it. He spent a lot of time copying into a handwriting book. The school day was from 8.30 to 12.30, after which he was free. Most of the school intake were from a ramshackle village near by and a conscripts' army camp.

War against polio

From the Deputy Executive Director of Unicef — UK

Sir, The logistics of the massive immunisation campaign to eradicate polio in India (report, November 28), together with the need to keep the vaccine safe from excessive heat while working in deserts and extremes of temperature, make this a staggering undertaking.

Over the last year, 145 million children under five years of age have been vaccinated against polio throughout the former Soviet Union and Central Asia, 60 million in 25 countries in Africa, 80 million in China and, in the next two months, 125 million in India. Every child missed is regarded as a lost opportunity; it is virtually a personal service for each of the 430

million children under five in the developing world. The partnership which has enabled this phenomenal campaign to be waged successfully has included the World Health Organisation, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Rotary International and the United Nations Children's Fund. This partnership has worked in the best spirit of the new direction called for in the Government White Paper, *Eliminating World Poverty*, published last month (report and leading article, November 6; letters, November 13) and shows that this approach works.

Yours faithfully,
MARIE STAUNTON,
Deputy Executive Director,
Unicef — UK,
55 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2,
December 2.

The ROH's acknowledged problems cannot be resolved by squeezing the ENO under the same roof — even, heaven help us, under the same management. That is plain dotty. Indeed, should Chris Smith be determined to proceed with his plan, we are left with but one conclusion: that it is he who should be left prancing about at midnight in the Forest of Arden with a pair of antlers on his head, and not good Sir John Falstaff.

Yours sincerely,
EDWINA CURRIE,
The Tower House, Farnham, Dorset,
December 4.

Although naturally we did what we could with him at home we had misgivings and, when he was the right age for junior school, year three here, we returned to England. We warned the school here about his previous education and were prepared for him to need special lessons to catch up with his peers.

How very foolish we were. He was way ahead of all his contemporaries, girls included, and has had to mark time in many lessons since. The despairing question we often ask ourselves now is obvious: if our son, clever, but not a genius, could do this in a foreign language he had by no means mastered, in a school with no resources and in half a school day, what in heaven's name had his contemporaries been doing all that time to have achieved so little?

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH BANGS JONES,
Downlands,
3 Down Lane, Braunton, Devon,
timiz@lineone.net
December 1.

Matters of conscience

From Mrs Mary Beard

Sir, Lord Rix's letter today suggests that Members of Parliament have few opportunities "to speak their own minds and vote according to their principles". Meanwhile, on the front page yesterday, your report on the Government's problems with benefit cuts says that the Labour whips may "try to outflank the rebels by giving them leave from parliamentary duties to spend time in their constituencies during the crucial vote".

The implication of this is that the party and not the electorate can determine whether an elected Member is present in the House to cast his or her vote on legislation. Democracy?

Yours truly,
MARY BEARD,
Dromard House,
Kesh, Co Fermanagh,
December 2.

when it comes to practical policy. I remain yours sincerely,
ALEXANDER FERGUSSON
(President, Blackface Sheep Breeders' Association),
Alton Albany, Barr, Girvan, Ayrshire,
December 3.

From Mr Desmond Armour

Sir, When the miners protested against cheap coal imports destroying their industry, their skulls were broken. When farmers stop cheap Irish meat coming into the country, they have done every day this week, nobody does anything about it. Is this Government as frightened of the farmers as is the French Government?

Yours faithfully,
DESMOND ARMOUR,
2 Mundens Lane,
Alveston, Sherborne, Dorset.

The voyage of Jacob of Ancona

From Mr David Selbourne

Sir, Dr David Abulafia ("An amazing journey — or just a hoax?", December 1) thinks Jacob of Ancona is a "Jewish Gulliver" rather than a Jewish Marco Polo. But like many scholars who have written on my translation of *The City of Light*, he makes a number of errors in his account of the work.

Thus he is mistaken in his assertion that Venice had "suppressed" voyages from Ancona to the ports of the East in 1270, when Jacob set sail. It is true that there was rivalry and hostility between the two Adriatic port cities for control of the Adriatic and Byzantine trade. J. F. Leonhard, in his detailed study of mercantile Ancona in the Middle Ages (*Ancona nel basso Medio Evo*, Ancona, 1902), describes several unsuccessful attempts by the Venetians to blockade the port between 1228 and 1231. And after Jacob's return to Ancona (in 1273) there were several sea battles between Venice and Ancona until the peace treaty signed between them in 1281.

But notwithstanding the intermittent conflicts, the 13th century was a period of commercial prosperity for the city of Ancona, derived from both local and long-distance trade, and a voyage such as Jacob's made during the interregnum in hostilities between the cities is entirely plausible. Far from its trade being "suppressed", Ancona was an active and flourishing port in 1270.

San Giovanni d'Acari (Acari) had not been "flattened" at the time of Jacob's arrival. It had been damaged, not flattened, 15 years earlier, as a result of conflicts between Venetians and Genoese. But by Jacob's arrival in May 1270, he reports the resumption of friendly relations there between Italian merchants hailing from different cities, and I see no reason to doubt him.

Finally, giving an inaccurate and highly-coloured summary of my translation, Dr Abulafia states — to whom Jacob makes several references — "can easily be shown to be a figment of the imagination". Unfortunately he does not furnish any real evidence for his assertion. It will be up to scholars of medieval Aragon to explore this question further.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID SELBOURNE,
C. P. 152,
61029 Urbino (PS), Italy,
December 1.

Wolsey invoked

From the Lord Chancellor

Sir, Since Monday, December 1, you have published a number of articles referring to me and Cardinal Wolsey. Other newspapers have followed your lead. Perhaps I could remind your readers that when I compared myself to Wolsey in a speech to the Political Committee of the Reform Club on October 21 I was making a joke. I gave the text of this speech, including all its jokes, to your Legal Correspondent when I was interviewed by her on November 4.

The context was a list of previous Lord Chancellors who had all exercised broad influence over government policy. The specific joke about Cardinal Wolsey was that he is widely credited with the authorship of the original Star Chamber, the common nickname of a Cabinet committee which I chair today.

In an otherwise fair and balanced first leader on Monday, you relied on the Cardinal Wolsey comparison to say that I am "not a man burdened with false humility" and I have "something still to learn about hubris". I am sorry that my sense of humour was not appreciated and has been subsequently misinterpreted.

Yours sincerely,
IRVINE OF LAIRG,
House of Lords,
December 4.

Tally ho!

From Rear-Admiral Peter Marsden

Sir, You can always tell a cavalryman; but you cannot tell him much. However, may I be so bold as to tell the gallant Field Marshal (letter, November 29) that I can well understand why UK cavalrymen, bored to *extremis* by long years stationed in a not wholly welcoming allied country, should have recourse to exercising themselves by chasing subalterns across the German plains on courses conjured up with customary Camberley cunning.

However, for those of us who are opposing Michael Foster's Bill with intense fervour, it is the sight and sound of hounds in full cry after their quarry, checking to reacquire the scent, perhaps temporarily confused by a cunning fresh hare or fox taking up the cause and then refining the original line, which entices us to turn out week after week in all weathers.

Would one ever want to hunt a cavalryman twice?

Yours faithfully,
PETER MARSDEN,
Lucerne, St Catherine's Road,
Niton Undercliff,
Nr Ventnor, Isle of Wight,
December 1.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

OBITUARIES

GLYN DEARMAN

Glyn Dearman, BBC radio drama producer, died on November 30 following a fall at his London home aged 57. He was born on December 30, 1939.

Glyn Dearman was a fearless and enthusiastic radio drama producer, in an association with the BBC which had, including his acting career, lasted for more than 45 years. In that time he had presided over work ranging from popular serials to classical drama, notably his Shakespeare productions with Kenneth Branagh, in which the nonagenarian Sir John Gielgud participated.

As a child actor he had parts in a number of *Children's Hour* productions; he had started as Jennings in the serial *Jennings at School*, which ran for a number of years and was wildly popular with young and old. At the same time as working hard on radio he was appearing in several British films. In 1951 he featured as Tiny Tim in *Alastair Sim's Scrooge* (in the film of that title) and as Little Arthur in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, giving suitably tear-jerking performances in both these roles.

This early stardom was slightly at odds with a family background which included three aunts who had married into the peerage. They were three of the six daughters of his grandmother, Kate Meyrick, who had taken to running nightclubs in the 1920s in order to pay for their education. Her clubs, especially the "43" in Gerrard Street, were patronised by the then Prince of Wales, King Carol of Romania, Noël Coward and other members of high society.

He much admired his grandmother, and it is possible that his flair for production and for casting was due to her example, since he always maintained that a good production was rather like giving a good party. She would certainly have approved of many of his star-filled casts of later

years, one of which included the present Prince of Wales, whom he persuaded to play Prince Hal to Sir Robert Stephens's Falstaff in a 1994 recording of Shakespearean excerpts issued on cassette and CD as *The Prince's Choice*.

Once his voice had broken, Dearman remained an actor and concentrated on radio. He joined the BBC Drama Repertory Company and had a continuing role in the popular daily soap opera *Mrs Dale's Diary*. Little did he realise then that it would fall to his lot to terminate this long-running serial in 1969, after it had changed its name to *The Dales* and after Jesse Matthews, with whom he had an excellent, mutually admiring rapport, had taken over the part of Mrs Dale. He had earlier become a producer of the programme, and by the time of its demise had been its editor-in-chief for more than two years.

He immediately moved on to run its replacement as a daily soap opera, *Wagoners' Walk*. So successful was this programme that it came to beat *The Archers* in the ratings charts, and much credit for this must go to Dearman, his organisational skills and his establishment of a brilliant team of writers and actors.

Six years under the daily pressure of soap operas is a gruelling long time, and it was with some relief that he moved into the mainstream of radio drama production. Here he was able to exploit his talents for light comedy, his technical expertise, his feeling for music, and his ear for casting as well as his flair for publicity. He recognised the value of star-casting and was never afraid to work with the biggest names in the business. There are few in the current theatrical aristocracy who have not worked with him, and all would acknowledge their enjoyment of the experience. He worked hard with his actors but always made the process fun.

He won national and international awards for his work. Among prize-winning productions were *Gormenghast* by



Mervyn Peake starring the singer Sting; *Come Unto These Yellow Sands* by Angela Carter (he also directed her *Company of Wolves*, which was later made into a full-length feature film); and an experimental piece of radio drama by the actor Andrew Sachs called *The Revenge*.

This was a play without words, and since it needed no translation it is not surprising that this prize-winning production was aired by most of the world's leading broadcasting organisations. He daintily cast John Osborne and Jill Bennett, in their happier married days, in three

plays by Feydeau; he was responsible for a masterly production of Sandy Wilson's *Valmouth* starring Penelope Fielding and Elisabeth Welch; and a serialisation of Jeffrey Archer's *Not a Penny More*. Not a Penny Less in 1980, so boosting sales of the original novel that it set its author well

on the road to fortune, if not to genuine literary fame. *Svengeff*, *Maigret*, *Dracula*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Claudius*, *Frankenstein*, were all familiar characters to him and were perfectly cast by him.

In more recent years he worked with Kenneth Branagh and his Renaissance Theatre Company on radio productions of *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *King Lear* with Sir John Gielgud who was 90 at the time of the recording in the title role (ten years too old for the part, as the theatrical knight remarked).

These productions were also issued on cassette and CD, but too much of a radio producer's work is ephemeral and rests in memory or locked in the archive at Broadcasting House, unlikely ever to be heard again, especially after April next year, when few plays transmitted will be of a duration longer than 60 minutes. Disenchanted by what he saw as having become a joyless institution which was uninterested in people and the creative spirit, he took early retirement from the BBC in 1995 and set up his own independent audio company, Arcadia.

It is the big names and the well-known works which are remembered, but Glyn Dearman nurtured a great deal of new writing talent and gave employment to many excellent actors who do not necessarily have household names. Many of these artists became good friends and returned the love, encouragement and admiration he gave them. He needed this, for public success did not make for a happy private life. This had more than its due share of the darkness of the soul and a painful loneliness in the midst of a crowd of friends. His was an outgoing life and he found it easier to give than to receive.

Glyn Dearman married, in 1961, Susan MacDonald, granddaughter of the former Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. The marriage was dissolved in 1967. There were no children.

SIR JOHN COULSON

Sir John Coulson, KCMG, Secretary-General of the European Free Trade Association (Efta) 1965-72, died on November 15 aged 88. He was born on September 13, 1909.

AS A clerk in the Foreign Office, John Coulson was responsible for sending off the telegram which declared war on Hitler in 1939. It was a momentous start to an eventful war for Coulson, then a rising young star in Whitehall. After spells in the Ministry of Economic Warfare and the War Cabinet Office, he returned to the Foreign Office as deputy to Gladwyn Jebb in the Department for Postwar Reconstruction, with special responsibility for economic matters. During the war he also travelled in the entourage of the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, to several of the big three-power conferences, including those in Moscow, Cairo and Potsdam.

Newly appointed CMG at the astonishingly early age of 37, Coulson was posted to Paris in 1946, then to New York as deputy head of Britain's delegation to the UN. He headed the economic affairs department of the Foreign Office from 1952 to 1955, before returning to the United States as minister in the Embassy in Washington.

The Suez crisis then provided him with one of the hardest tests of his career. Left in charge at the British Embassy in Washington during an interregnum between the departure of one Ambassador, Sir Roger Makins, and the arrival of his successor, Sir Harold Caccia, Coulson was summoned to the White House by President Eisenhower to explain British policy — which was no clearer to him than to the President. There followed equally difficult dialogues with the hostile American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. But Coulson acquitted himself well and was advanced to KCMG at the remarkably early age of 48.

He returned to Britain as assistant to the Paymaster General, Reginald Maudling, charged with the impossible task of negotiating a free trade area within Europe, at a time when Whitehall was scared that Britain was in danger of being left behind by the formation of the Common Market. Various options were being explored to create new trading links with the original six Common Market powers, and Coulson toured European capitals trying to sell them the wider British proposals, which were eventually thrown out by the French. In the end, the Government had to be content with an exclusive European Free Trade Association.

ation, a grouping known as the "outer seven", whose founder members were the "little six" less influential European nation states: Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, plus, of course, the UK. On Coulson's career, however, the creation of Efta was to have a decisive influence.

In 1960, after Maudling's move to be President of the Board of Trade, he left the Paymaster General's office for Stockholm as British Ambassador, returning three years later as a deputy under-secretary, in charge of administration — at a time when the Foreign Office was preparing for its eventual merger, in 1967, with the Commonwealth Relations Office. In 1965 he was himself preparing to take over as Britain's envoy in Madrid — and had already started to learn Spanish — when a plea came from Efta.

The organisation was in sudden need of a new Secretary-General, and its Scandinavian member countries were unanimous in calling for Coulson. As well as having been prominent in the negotiations which had established the free trade area, he had made a good impression during his three years in Stockholm. Yielding to persuasion, he left the Foreign Office to take over the Efta office in Geneva.

Seven years later, on the eve of Britain's long-delayed entry into the EEC (with Denmark) departure from Efta, he retired. His last assignment as Secretary-General had been to seek assurances that the interests of those still in Efta would be protected.

John Eltringham Coulson was born in Newcastle upon Tyne, the son of a coal industry executive. He won a scholarship to Rugby, where he was head of his house, and another scholarship to Corpus Christi, Cambridge, where he took a double first in classics. The college made him an honorary fellow in 1975. He was also a gifted linguist, adding Russian, Swedish and Romanian to the French and German demanded by the Diplomatic Service.

Coulson was a slightly built and unassuming man, whose quiet dry sense of humour made him popular with subordinates. On retiring he accepted several directorships, two of them with Swedish companies, but otherwise busied himself with voluntary work. He was for seven years president of the Hampshire branch of the Red Cross. When off-duty he was happiest fly-fishing for trout on the Itchen.

In 1944 he married his wife Mavis, who had worked for him as a secretary at the Foreign Office. She and their two sons survive him.



WILLIAM PERRIE

William Perrie, prison governor, died on November 15 aged 79. He was born on April 11, 1918.

IN A career spanning more than 30 years, William Perrie was one of the leading prison governors in the country. For 16 years, between 1962 and 1978, he was in charge of four different prisons, including three of the most difficult. His time as a governor coincided with three decades of tribulation and disaster for the Prison Service.

A series of high-profile escapes in the mid 1960s culminated

in that of George Blake from Wormwood Scrubs in 1966. Lord Mountbatten's subsequent inquiry eventually led to the setting-up of a number of high-security prisons, with dog patrols, closed-circuit television surveillance and multiple barriers to escape. These "dispersal prisons" — so called because the highest risk prisoners were dispersed among them — included Hull Prison, to which Perrie was posted in 1968.

He was so successful at Hull that he was promoted to the top class of governor and given charge of the new prison at Long Lartin, near Worces-

ter, in 1970. He was governor there for five distinguished years.

In 1975 Birmingham's Winson Green Prison became a focus of controversy. Following the arrest of those charged with the Birmingham pub bombings, serious allegations were made about their treatment by the police and prison warders.

Because of his reputation, Perrie was selected by the Prison Service to take on this thankless assignment. His guidance helped to maintain morale through the trial of some of the staff (who were eventually acquitted), and then laid the foundations for a recovery before his retirement in 1978.

Bill Perrie — as he was always known — was a big, robust man, keen on jogging every day, and on George Blake provided a complex challenge (though Blake escaped after only 5½ years). Seeking to balance security with the individuals' needs, Perrie gradually found a workable solution. He was prepared to discuss the prisoners' particular problems and offer them a little humane flexibility, in matters such as personal possessions and dress.

The very long sentences first imposed on the notorious train robbers and on George Blake provided a complex challenge (though Blake escaped after only 5½ years). Seeking to balance security with the individuals' needs, Perrie gradually found a workable solution. He was prepared to discuss the prisoners' particular problems and offer them a little humane flexibility, in matters such as personal possessions and dress.

As a result of this, Perrie was well respected by both prisoners and staff, which was a considerable achievement at a time of inmate disturbances and staff industrial action. Such was his standing that after his retirement an annual lecture was established and named after him. In 1993 the Perrie Lecture was given by the then Shadow Home Secretary, Tony Blair.

William Perrie was born in Larkhall, Lanarkshire, and left school at 15. He worked as a painter and decorator until the outbreak of war, when he joined the Lowland Division. He served with the Reconnaissance Corps, rising to be a sergeant major and being mentioned in dispatches.

After the war he joined the Prison Service as an officer at Norwich Prison, soon moving to Holesley Bay Borstal. His ability, especially with young offenders, soon caught the eye of the Prison Commissioners, and he was selected for promotion to assistant governor. He served at Camp Hill, Leyhill and Wakefield — working largely with young offenders — before being posted as deputy governor to Cardiff Prison from 1958 to 1960.

This was followed by a spell in charge of the boys' prison at Wormwood Scrubs before he went back to South Wales as Governor of Swansea Prison in 1962. Three years later he was commended in an appeal judgment by the Lord Chief Justice for his efforts with, and kindness towards, a very inadequate prisoner. That incident typifies Bill Perrie's work.

He is survived by his wife, Olive, and his son.

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NEWS

Help planned for beef ban farms

An emergency package of help for the livestock industry is being considered by the Government against a background of spreading protests by British farmers angry at the impact of cheap beef imports on their crisis-ridden industry.

As farmers blockading British ports were told that they were not above the law, the Cabinet decided to set up a far-reaching inquiry into the origins and conduct of the BSE crisis as part of its efforts to restore confidence in British beef. Pages 1, 4

Prince and the pauper

The Prince of Wales clearly did not recognise the middle-aged man sitting next to him, whom he thought was about to explain what it is like to make a living by selling *The Big Issue*. But self-confessed alcoholic Clive Harold stunned the Prince when he said: "We were at school together". Pages 1, 3

World Cup draw

England are in one of the easier pools after the 1998 World Cup draw. They meet Romania, Tunisia and Colombia. Scotland have to play Brazil, Morocco and Norway. Pages 1, 54

Joining the queue

Former Cabinet Ministers, as Privy Counsellors, are now threatened with the loss of their traditional precedence in Commons debates. Page 1

Prisoners' rights

Curbs on the freedom of prisoners to talk to journalists were imposed by the Court of Appeal when it rejected that they were in breach of free speech. Page 2

AI Fayed accused

Tiny Rowland is accusing Mohamed Al Fayed of offering him £10 million and a shirt shop to level false bribery allegations against Michael Howard, the former Home Secretary. Page 6

Cost of care

Everyone may have to pay towards the cost of their nursing home care, Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, signalled as he announced the setting up of a Royal Commission. Page 5

Opera resignation

The chairman of the Royal Opera House resigned a day after the publication of a parliamentary report on Covent Garden's management. Page 9

A step in the wrong direction

The British front doorstep is to be sacrificed to political correctness. The construction minister Nick Raynsford will announce changes to the building regulations before Christmas that will make level thresholds mandatory on all new homes to ensure access for wheelchairs. Existing buildings will not be affected. Pages 1, 5

Southern comfort

Men living in Cambridge, Guildford and Woking can expect to live nearly seven years longer than those in parts of Manchester and Liverpool. Page 11

Super-sirs

Education action zones run by private companies and "super-heads" paid up to £100,000 a year could be the testbeds for a deregulated state education system, ministers said. Page 13

Saving Pompeii

British and Italian archaeologists welcomed a decision by Unesco to make Pompeii a World Heritage site as "the last chance to rescue it from disintegration". Page 16

Wifely values

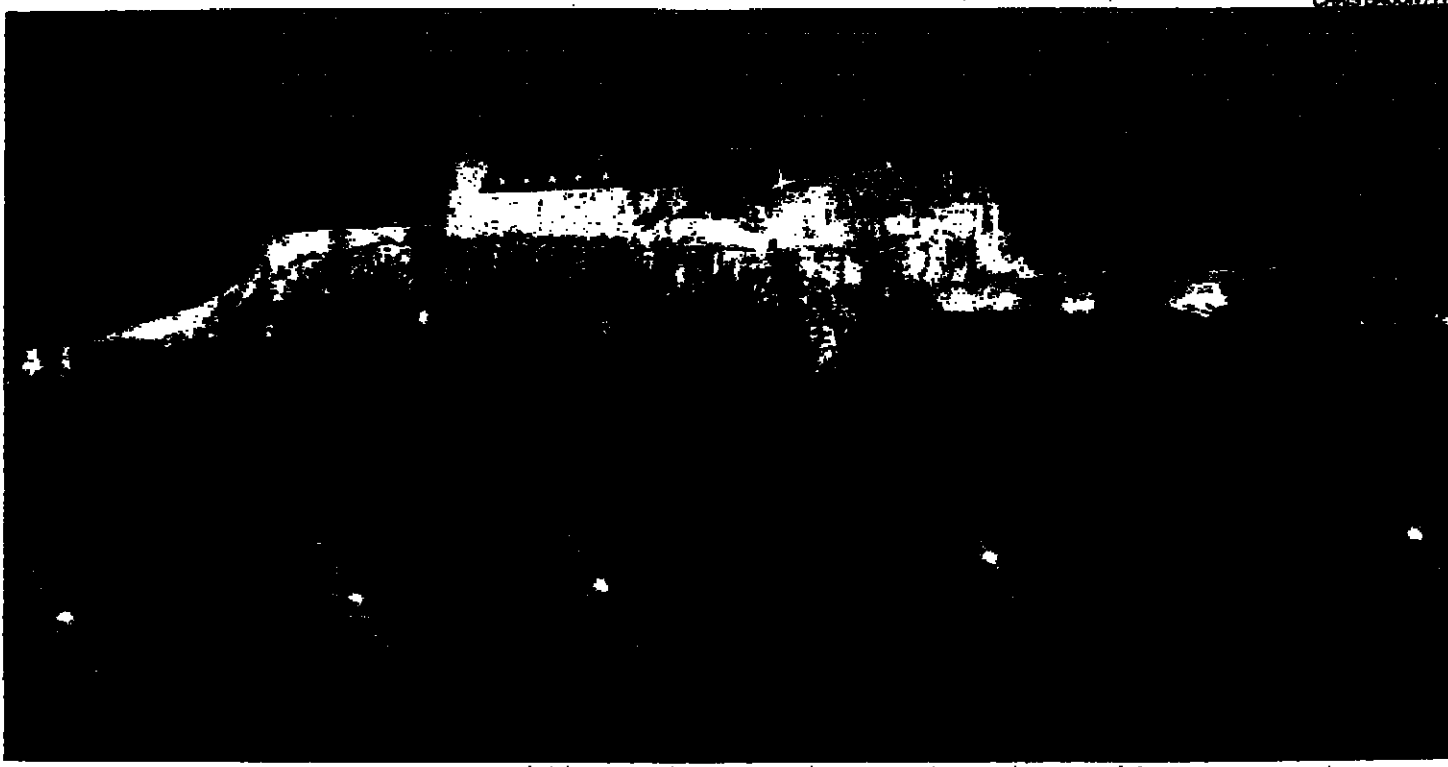
Lorna Wendt and her husband Gary were both claiming victory last night in a divorce case watched across America as a test of the value of the "corporate wife". Page 17

Mandela case

Relatives of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's alleged murder victims stormed out of hearings in which she denied any part in the disappearance and murder of their sons. Page 18

On the brink of war

Israel has set up a panel to investigate an espionage scandal after the disclosure that it nearly went to war against Syria because of disinformation. Page 19



Stirling Castle bathed in a new floodlighting system that has cost £500,000, including dramatic lighting effects inside the building.

BUSINESS

Euro money: The European Investment Bank is set to offer Railtrack £600 million in loans to help kick-start the company's ambitious investment programme. The Railtrack loans form part of a package totalling £1 billion. Page 29

Pensions: Britain's biggest insurer, the Prudential, has for the second time missed a crucial regulatory deadline for dealing with its most serious cases of pensions mis-selling. Page 29

Mortgages: The Halifax delivered a blow to its 2.5 million borrowers, increasing its mortgage rate from 8.45 per cent to 8.7. Page 29

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 111.6 to 5082.3. Sterling fell to 104.9, falling from DM2.9773 to DM2.9670 and \$1.6836 to \$1.6762. Page 32

Rugby union: Austin Healey, usually a scrum half, has been chosen by England on the left wing for the match against New Zealand at Twickenham. There are five other changes. Page 52

Cricket: The International Cricket Council is to create a Test match championship but must decide whether it will be a single event or a rolling league table. Page 48

Football: West Bromwich Albion refused to accept the resignation of Ray Harford, claiming that they required six months' notice of his intention to leave. Page 53

Tennis: Greg Rusedzki withdrew from the Albert Hall doubles even though he had been practising in the morning and had scheduled a further session. Page 54

Final aria: After 400 years, has opera reached the end of its natural life as an art form? Richard Morrison looks beyond the crisis at Covent Garden. Page 38

Dion's day: The Canadian singer Celine Dion has taken firm hold of the baton handed to her by Barbra Streisand and boy, is she running with it. Page 38

Highly imperfect: Lou Reed's voice made the original *A Perfect Day* a thing of beauty, says Caitlin Moran — then along came a bunch of stars to ruin it. Page 38

More gore: Thomas Kyd's blood-thirsty Elizabethan revenge play *The Spanish Tragedy* gets the RSC treatment at the Barbican with Siobhan Redmond in blazing form. Page 40

TOMORROW

IN THE SATURDAY TIMES

BOND AND BLAIR
"Brosnan is a new Labour 007. Tony Blair with lethal gadgets."

MIRACLE DOCTORS
The pioneer doctors working to rid the world of killer diseases

Styleseekers: Take three girls, different budgets and lots of party invitations. What dresses would they choose? Page 22

Feeding time: It's Christmas, and thousands will be borrowing from loan sharks. Bill Frost talks to somebody who did. Page 23

Hot sounder: Hi-fi products are responding to the challenge presented by the growth in mass-market mini systems. Pages 36, 37

Not so idyllic: For schoolchildren, living in the country is not as enjoyable as it may be for their parents. Schools are starting to solve the problems. Page 43

Sky life: Raymond Snoddy goes to Annabel's to witness the end of an era: the retirement of Sam Christol of BSkyB. Page 45

The targeting of Irish beef exports to Britain is quite legitimate, indeed illegal, within the well-established regime of the Common Agricultural Policy. Irish farmers' organisations are understandably furious about the policing failures which have allowed Welsh farmers to board ferry vessels to examine individual containers—Irish Times

Preview: From Jane Asher to Steve Davis redheads rule. *Red Hair Day* (BBC1, 9pm). Review: Matthew Bond offers counsel for documentary victims. Pages 50, 51

Farmed out

To be deaf to distress but weak on crime is hardly enlightened leadership. Page 3

More free schools

If there were any doubt that the Government was prepared to take on the educational establishment, the publication of yesterday's School Standards Bill should help to dispel it. Page 2

Toast to the north

The Norwegian Ambassador last night lit up the magnificent Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square, in a ceremony that has become one of the most celebrated and popular symbols of friendship between the countries. Page 25

MATTHEW PARRIS

The Lib Dems really do believe in individual freedom and the State's overriding duty to care for the weak. So why are they letting Labour off the hook? Page 24

KEN JACKSON

Blair's militant tendency: beware the Trotskyists of the Labour right. Page 24

JOHN LLOYD

Medicine for the excluded: Mandelson's unit heralds a revolution in government. Page 21

PETER RIDDELL

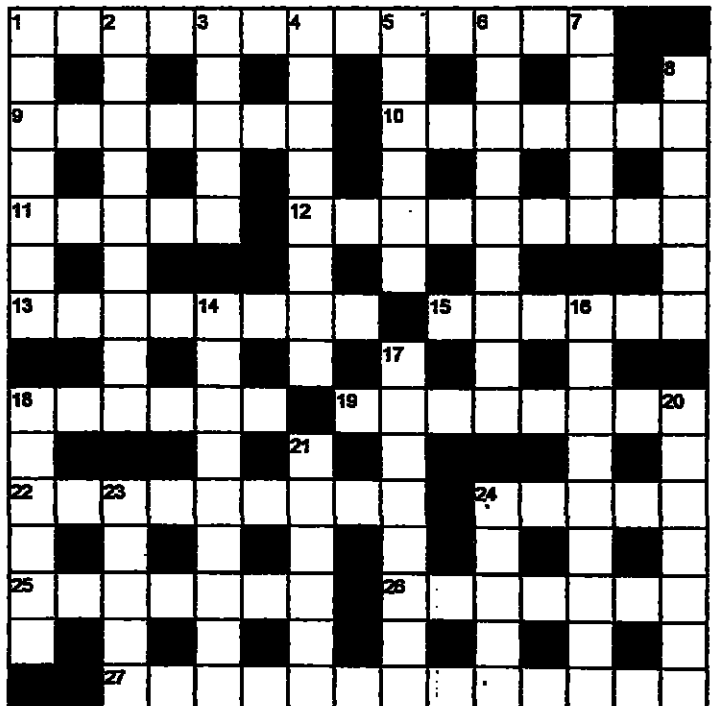
The Government cannot see a problem without setting up a review. Getting on for a hundred inquiries, reviews and task forces have been created since the election. Page 14

Glyn Dwyman, radio drama producer; Sir John Coulson, diplomat; William Perrie, prison governor. Page 27

Beef ban and Irish imports: Royal Opera; Jacob of Ardenza; Lord Chancellor. Page 25

1, 8, 36, 39, 47, 49: Bonus: 37
The jackpot of £4.9m will rollover.

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,655



- ACROSS**
- Some puffers play this night and day (5,3,5).
 - Complain about this Latin hairstyle (7).
 - Records vault I have produced (7).
 - Demand cutback by Eastern state (5).
 - With other people coming in, continually improving (2,3,4).
 - Measure introduced by party is an evasive move (9).
 - A lot of pupils taking course (6).
 - Creature who's mischievous and incredible sent round puzzle (6).
 - Disorganised rag ended in chaos (8).
 - Shift mark from former triangular part of building (9).
 - With triumph, instal leader of nation (5).
- DOWN**
- Riddle of domestic assistant I dismissed (7).
 - Anticipate having products of mine included in payment (7).
 - Courier needing efficiency, and something added (8,5).
 - Child's garment brought in from Persia (7).
 - Hare found in unusual form not previously encountered (7-2).
 - Tube used to carry a coin, once (5).
 - Surrender Hampshire's leader to Hampshire town (4,4).
 - Designing vessel takes a year (6).
 - Box in Scotland's unmatched players (9).
 - Liquid from well raised with iron tool (5).
 - Fashion models, infrequently (6).
 - Youth — a boy daughter speaks about (5,4).
 - Taken up, green sods get relaid (9).
 - Happy to attend clubs, as long as I get admitted (8).
 - Quarrel with composer about note (6).
 - Nureyev, for one, read Sun irregularly (7).
 - Foreign cash put into plant (6).
 - Climbing mountain, I had warm cover over shoulder (5).
 - Engineers splitting specialised railway carriage and tender (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,654

OFFICIAL PARAMEDIC
VETERAN ROYAL
EDITORIAL HOMER
RAGS IN THE
FOREIGN EXCHANGE
LONDON ONE
OLIVES ONE LINE
WON ST C
NUTRITION ABSES
RPA BA I
THIN ON THE GROUND
CROSS THE ONE
TRUST INTENTION
UCL NEBO C
PASSENGER TUNNY

Times Two Crossword, page 56

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HOURS OF DARKNESS
Sun rises: 7.45 am Sun sets: 3.50 pm
Moon sets: 9.55 pm Moon rises: 11.30 pm
First quarter December 7
London 3.55 pm to 7.50 am
Bristol 4.05 pm to 8.00 am
Edinburgh 4.41 pm to 8.27 am
Manchester 3.51 pm to 8.09 am
Perthshire 4.21 pm to 8.05 am

FORECAST
General: milder, wet and windy weather will spread into northern areas. England and Wales will start dry with widespread frost. Patchy freezing fog will thin during the morning with bright or sunny intervals in most parts. Cloud will increase from the North West, with rain in the far north of England during afternoon. Scotland and Northern Ireland will be mainly cloudy with rain spreading southeast and becoming persistent.
London, E Anglia, E & W Midlands, Channel Isles, N & S Wales, and SE, SW, Central N & S, E and NW England: early frost. Patchy fog thinning. Dry with bright intervals, cloud thickening. Wind becoming moderate SW. Max 7C (45F).
Lake District, Isle of Man, NE England: mostly dry and cloudy at first. Rain in places in afternoon. Wind becoming strong SW. Max 8C (46F).
Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Northern Ireland: rain spreading south, heavy at times. Wind strong SW, perhaps gale. Max 9C (48F).
Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE & NW Scotland, Argyll, Orkney, Shetland: rain, heavy at times. Wind strong or gale SW. Mid. Max 10C (50F).
Republic of Ireland: southern areas dry with bright intervals at first. Rain spreading south into the north. Wind strong SW. Max temp 9C (48F).
Outlook: mild, unsettled, some rain.

24 hrs to 5 pm: b=brilliant; c=cloud; d=drizzle; dc=drizzle; ds=drizzle; f=fog; g=gale; h=heavy rain; l=light rain; m=moderate rain; n=night; o=other; p=poor; r=rain; s=sunny; t=thunder; v=very; w=wind; x=other; y=other; z=other.

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Amsterdam	3.7	0.01	5	41	b	
Birmingham	3.0	0.01	6	43	a	
Bristol	3.2	0.01	4	39	s	
Cardiff	4.5	0.01	5	43	s	
Cheltenham	1.5	0.04	6	43	sh	
Chesham	6.0	0.15	6	43	d	
Chichester	7.4	0.01	5	41	c	
Chorley	0.7	0.13	7	45	c	
Colchester	0.5	0.01	6	43	d	
Doncaster	0.2	0.03	1	34	c	
Edinburgh	6.8	0.01	6	43	c	
Exeter	5.5	0.01	7	45	s	
Falmouth	7.4	0.01	5	41	c	
Farnham	6.4	0.01	4	39	b	
Glasgow	0.1	0.01	6	43	sh	
Guernsey	6.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
Heathrow	1.0	0.17	8	43	sh	
Hemel Hempstead	6.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
Hove	0.1	0.13	7	45	c	
Humberside	6.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
Isle of Wight	6.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
Jersey	6.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
Leeds	0.1	0.01	4	39	c	

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Lancaster	0.7	0.01	6	43	sh	
Leeds	0.1	0.01	4	39	c	
Leicester	0.7	0.01	6	43	sh	
Leicester	0.7	0.01	6	43	sh	
Leicester	0.7	0.01	6	43	sh	
Leicester	0.7	0.01	6	43	sh	
Leicester	0.7	0.01	6	43	sh	
Leicester	0.7	0.01	6	43	sh	
Leicester	0.7	0.01	6	43	sh	
Leicester	0.7	0.01	6	43	sh	



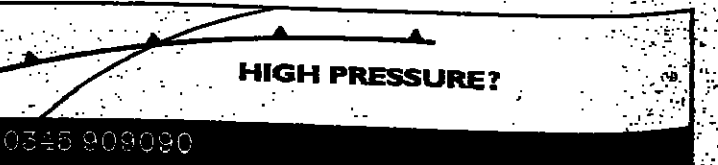
Changes to the chart below from noon: High B will drift slowly south. Low I will move slowly NE. Low S will edge slowly east. Low T will slowly fall.

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	

HIGHEST & LOWEST

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	
London	0.4	0.01	6	43	sh	

Yesterday: Highest temp: Sutton Coldfield, 10C (50F); lowest day max: Caerphilly, 0C (32F); highest night min: Far Isle, Shetland, 0.4C; highest sunrise: Farnham and Farnham, 7.25.

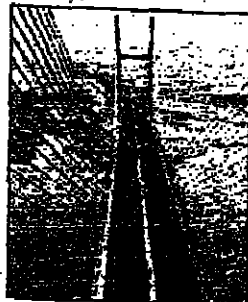


The Samaritans 0345 909090

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 43.6% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the second half of 1996

مكتبة الأهل

2
TODAY



Low-key bank builds bridges in markets as EMU approaches
PAGE 33



**Not always a happy
country life
for schoolchildren
PAGE 43**



England look to Smithies for World Cup lead
PAGES 48-56

**TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES
54, 55**

FRIDAY DECEMBER 5 1997

BUSINESS TODAY

To make matters worse, these borrowers will also have to absorb the reduction in mortgage tax relief from 15 per cent to 10 per cent on April 6.

On the stock market, the FTSE 100 index closed 111.6 points higher at 5,082.3, buoyed by signs that institutions are ploughing cash into UK shares before end-of-the-year

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GrandMet calls time with £147m deck-clearance

By DOMINIC WALSH

A DECK-CLEARING exercise ahead of its £23 billion merger with Guinness knocked £147 million off annual profits at Grand Metropolitan, the Burger King to Smirnoff vodka group.

Provisions relating to the sale of such businesses as the Intrepreneur Pub Company, Burger King's French operation and Pillsbury's Aunt Nel-

lie's Kitchens restricted the company to pre-tax profits of £834 million in the year to September 30. Excluding exceptional items, the figure was in line with analysts' expectations, at £981 million, a 1.7 per cent increase.

Sterling's strength wiped £72 million from pre-tax profits, although hedging of its US exposure reduced the net impact by £14 million. At level exchange rates pre-tax profits were 9 per cent ahead. Turnover dipped

from £8.97 billion to £8.17 billion. Admitting to a degree of nostalgia as he brought down the curtain on the company's 43-year existence, George Bull, chairman, said: "As it departs the world, GrandMet is in good shape. All the bits and pieces we needed to do have been done, profits are excellent and we're very excited."

IDV, the group's spirits division, lifted operating profits 6 per cent in local currency terms to £460 million.

Ironically, the best performing of its key brands was Bombay gin, which is expected to be sold to satisfy US regulators over the merger. The brand saw volume growth of 28 per cent compared with 1 per cent for Smirnoff. Overall volumes were "well ahead of the game", up 2 per cent, after a 6 per cent rise in marketing spend to £420 million.

Pillsbury, the US food business, improved profits 12 per cent to £457 million, while Burger King was up 8 per cent, at £170 million.

John McGrath, chief executive, said the creation of Diageo, to be completed in two weeks, would prompt rivals to consider consolidation. Earnings per share, excluding exceptional items, rose 0.6 per cent to 31.2p, but as a result of the merger there is no final dividend. Diageo shareholders will receive a 12.5p interim dividend in April.

GEC starts shake-up with £4bn flotation

By ADAM JONES

THE restructuring of GEC went into full swing yesterday with the announcement of the flotation of GEC Alsthom and a £300 million share buyback.

GEC shares rose 13.5p to 403.5p, banishing some of the negative sentiment that followed its failure to buy the defence electronics arm of Siemens and its exclusion from the restructuring of Thomson, the French defence group.

The flotation of GEC Alsthom, its power engineering and transportation joint venture with Alcatel Alsthom of France, is scheduled for the first six months of 1998. Both GEC and Alcatel will sell 26 per cent, retaining 24 per cent each for at least a year after flotation.

Analysts were valuing GEC Alsthom, which will be known as Alsthom when it becomes a listed French company, at £3.5 to £4 billion, suggesting that

GEC may receive about £875 million after tax from the sale. George Simpson, GEC managing director, said GEC has been in talks with a number of other companies about defence industry consolidation in Europe, including British Aerospace, but he said there was no particular proposals discussed.

Analysts said GEC continued to dismiss speculation of a merger with British Aerospace. Mr Simpson said the recent amalgamation of French defence interests was not necessarily a precursor to UK companies banding together.

The principle of a share buyback was authorised at the annual meeting in September. GEC said yesterday that up to £300 million of ordinary shares would be bought through SBC Warburg Dillon Read. The board will consider further repurchase programmes if appropriate.

Mr Simpson announced a 9 per cent rise in underlying sales, excluding currency effects, in the six months to September 30. Turnover rose to £5.1 billion. Profits before tax and exceptional items rose from £421 million to £442 million. This would have been £24 million higher at constant exchange rates. The company said the high underlying rate of growth may not be sustained in the second half.

Operating profits at GEC-Marconi rose 24 per cent when the effect of currency and acquisition was stripped out, driven by volume increases. On the same basis, the industrial group rose 21 per cent and GEC Alsthom 22 per cent. Operating profits for GEC's share of GPT, the telecommunications joint venture with Siemens of Germany, fell 1 per cent, however, as price falls wiped out volume growth.

Tempus, page 32



Frank Sytner, whose stake in the motor dealer will be worth £16.7 million after the stock market flotation

Sytner flotation seeks £4m cash

FRANK SYTNER, chairman of Sytner, is raising around £4 million cash from the flotation of the motor dealer and will continue to hold a stake of 33 per cent of the company, worth £16.7 million at the placing price of 230p a share. This price

values the company at £50 million and it is floating on a prospective multiple of 11 times 1997 earnings.

Of the £23.1 million raised in the flotation, £16.9 million will go into the company. Share dealings are expected

from December 11. Sytner represents BMW, Chrysler, Jeep, Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Volkswagen, Ferrari, Porsche and Daihatsu and is the sole importer of the BMW Alpina. It is the UK's largest dealer in new and used cars.

GUS ahead despite fall in catalogues

By FRASER NELSON

GREAT Universal Stores has admitted that it may have been overzealous in upgrading the service for its Kays catalogue after watching the division's operating profit fall 7 per cent at the halfway stage.

The retailer, which has added 24-hour call centres and next-day courier service for its catalogue orders, said the extra investment may be scaled back from the current level — understood to be more than £300,000 a week.

The catalogue division, whose titles include Choices, Marshall Ward and Disney, saw its operating profit drop to £38.5 million (£41.3 million) in the six months to September 30, although sales rose by 6.5 per cent to £704 million.

City analysts took heart from the revenue increase, and the shares rose 25p to 710p.

The company has also agreed to buy six catalogue titles from the Burton Group for £20 million, including Innovations. Overall pre-tax profits were £254 million (£237 million) for the half-year. Earnings were 17.3p (£15.6p) a share.

Lord Wolfson, chairman, said second-half trading was in line with the first six months. The interim dividend rises to 6p (5.5p), and is due on February 27.

Tempus, page 32

Deloitte left further behind bigger rivals

By ROBERT BRUCE

DELOITTE & TOUCHE, the smallest of the Big Six accounting firms and one of the two firms to eschew the current round of mergers, has released figures showing that its growth rate is not matching the rest of the top firms.

Worldwide the firm reported record revenues up 14 per cent to \$7.4 billion (about £4.4 billion) and in the UK the growth rate was 10.4 per cent with fees up to £442.4 million. Ed Kanas, the firm's worldwide chairman, said the results "confirm that we have the momentum to remain successful, attract the best people, and thrive in today's marketplace".

However, yesterday's figures suggest Deloitte is losing ground to its bigger rivals. Ernst & Young recently reported UK fee income up 15 per cent, while Andersen Worldwide, the only other firm not to go for a merger, reported an increase in global revenues of 25 per cent.

Deloitte said that consulting revenues grew 15.5 per cent, while the accounting practice lifted revenue 9.4 per cent. But the figures must be a worry. If the mergers planned by Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand and by KPMG and Ernst & Young are approved, Deloitte would be last and going backwards in a market with only four significant players.

Yorkshire Electricity pair to go

THE chief executive and finance director of Yorkshire Electricity are to leave the company less than a year after it was taken over by American Electric Power and New Century Energies, a US consortium.

Malcolm Chatwin, chief executive, and Tony Coleman are to leave at the end of the year. Mr Chatwin, whose last recorded salary was £207,000, and Mr Coleman, who was last paid £140,000, are likely to leave on substantial severance terms. Graham Hall, group operations director, will be chief executive.

Lazard fined

Lazard Freres, the US investment bank, has agreed to pay \$12 million (about £7.16 million) in fines and restitution to settle federal charges that the brokerage defrauded investors on the sale of \$683 million in municipal bonds.

UK preferred

The UK has maintained its record as the European country attracting the largest number of foreign investment projects, Ernst & Young's European Investment Monitor states.

Drug move

Chiroscience has submitted its application for European marketing approval of levobupivacaine, the anaesthetic.

Britannia Life to cut jobs with phasing out of IFAs

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

MORE than 400 jobs are to go at Britannia's life insurance operation as the building society withdraws from selling products through independent financial advisers and concentrates instead on branch distribution. The figure represents half the current workforce at the head office in Glasgow and 11 branches.

The move will mean the permanent loss of 240 jobs and the phasing out of a further 180 positions. Britannia Life, which has around 750,000 policies in force, will

withdraw from the independent financial adviser (IFA) market for new business with effect from December 12. In future life and pensions products will be solely distributed through its branch network.

John Heaps, chief executive, said: "While Britannia Life has been successful in recent years in growing in the IFA market, we do not believe that we will be able to compete profitably in the long term."

The group is now focusing on a single distribution channel — bancassurance. Britan-

nia investment and fund managers in Glasgow will continue to operate in the IFA market and are not affected by the restructuring.

The move follows a major review of the life business's distribution strategy, lasting almost a year. The group said it will lead to around 160 permanent job losses in Britannia Life's UK sales network. An additional 80 jobs will be lost at head office in Glasgow by the end of March 1998, and a further 180 jobs will be phased out by the end of 1999.

Stakis poised to lavish £85m on convention hotel

By DOMINIC WALSH

STAKIS, the hotel and casino group, will next month press the start-button for an £85 million extension of the London Metropole Hotel, which will take it to 1,000 bedrooms and triple its conference capacity.

David Michels, chief executive, said that the project would turn the Metropole into "the largest convention hotel in Europe bar none". Its position would be further enhanced by the scheduled completion next year of the Heathrow Express railway

link into the nearby Paddington station.

The £327 million acquisition of Metropole Hotels a year ago helped Stakis to achieve an 82 per cent jump in profits before tax and exceptional items, to £55.9 million, in the year to September 28 on turnover 49 per cent better, at £307 million. Earnings per share reached 6.58p (5.44p) and a final dividend of 1.45p, to be paid on April 7, makes 2.5p (2.15p).

Metropole boosted hotel division profits by 86 per cent, to £74.9 million, while casinos

dropped slightly to £7.8 million after the sale of the Barracuda in London. The LivingWell health club business, acquired in May, contributed profits of £1.6 million. Mr Michels said that, of the eight three-star hotels put up for sale in May, five were in solicitors' hands at a combined sale price of about £30 million. The other three would probably be kept and upgraded to four-star standard.

Tempus, page 32
City Diary, page 33

European and Asian orders light up TLG

European and Asian orders light up TLG

A STRONGER than expected recovery in France and Germany gave a timely first-half uplift to TLG, the lighting group that had failed to sparkle since its demerger from Thorn EMI in 1995. The company also did well in Asia, where contracts included the £16.1 million deal for runway systems for Chek Lap Kok, Hong Kong's new airport. Hamish Bryce, chairman, said that the emergency lighting and airfield lighting sectors would also underpin growth in the second half.

In the six months to September 30, TLG lifted pre-tax profits to £10 million, from £8.3 million. Earnings were 3.4p a share, up from 3p previously. The interim dividend is increased to 1.5p a share, from 1.4p previously. Interim profits have exceeded the pre-tax total of £8.6 million reported for the whole of the previous financial year, when the company incurred a £13.5 million restructuring charge. TLG shares were unchanged yesterday at 106p, against a demerger peak of 181p in early 1996.

Avon Rubber confident

AVON RUBBER raised pre-tax profits from £21.5 million to £26.4 million in the year to September 27 on sales by continuing businesses up from £250.1 million to £251.9 million. Earnings rose from 50.6p to 70.8p, out of which the dividend for the year rises from 19.5p to 21.15p. The company said that it was confident of further progress notwithstanding the strength of sterling, and that extra capacity provided by recent investments would enable the automotive components division to meet increased demand. The shares rose 9p to 632.5p.

Racal sells businesses

RACAL ELECTRONICS is selling the bulk of its health and safety equipment business to 3M for £43.2 million in cash. The businesses, which began with mining safety products in the 1970s, made an operating profit of £400,000 on turnover of about £45 million. They mainly produce respiratory protection equipment. The sale is due to be completed by January 30. The proceeds will be used to reduce Racal's net debt and the company is expecting an exceptional gain of about £20 million.

Spear & Jackson sold

US INDUSTRIES, the American consumer products manufacturer that was formerly part of Hanson, has acquired Spear & Jackson, the UK manufacturer of hand and garden tools, from Apex Partners, the venture capital company, for £63.75 million. S&J suffered during the recession of the early 1990s but has made a strong recovery. Its hand tool, precision products and industrial saw divisions are based in Sheffield. US Industries owns Jacuzzi bathroom products, Ames garden tools, Erdi toys and Rexair vacuum cleaners.

ML seeks to acquire

ML HOLDINGS is seeking acquisitions for its core electronic component distribution business. A £15 million one-off gain from selling its aerospace and marine division to Cobham helped ML to lift pre-tax profits to £7.17 million (£3.77 million) in the half year to September 30. Continuing businesses lifted operating profits to £4.15 million, from £3.15 million. Adjusted earnings per share were 2.3p (1.6p). The interim dividend is 0.5p, up 25 per cent. ML is to be renamed Sedgemoor.

FI buys IIS of India

FI GROUP, the supplier of computer software services, is to acquire IIS Infotech, an Indian computer software and training services company, for £22 million, plus possible further profit-related payments up to £2.7 million over the next 18 months. FI will partly fund the acquisition via a £14.6 million rights issue at 640p a share. Existing shares rose 95p to 832.5p yesterday. FI estimates its first half pre-tax profits at £4.3 million, up from £2.8 million.

Oil prices help Expro

LOW oil prices have generated a significant increase in business for Expro International Group, the oilfield services company. It said energy groups were seeking to maximise production from deepwater reservoirs and marginal fields. Expro lifted pre-tax profits to £10 million, from £8 million, in the six months to September 30 on turnover of £61.6 million, up from £49.9 million. Earnings rose to 11.7p a share, from 9.5p. The interim dividend rises 15 per cent to 3.05p a share.

STOCKS

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.39	2.42
Austria Sch	21.91	20.25
Belgium Fr	64.49	59.53
Canada \$	2.807	2.818
Cyprus Cyp	0.913	0.841
Denmark Kr	11.80	11.01
Finland Mk	6.53	6.70
France Fr	10.4	9.83
Germany Den	9.15	2.89
Greece Dr	492	453
Hong Kong \$	12.80	12.80
Iceland	182	119
Ireland Pk	1.19	1.19
Israel Shk	6.30	5.95
Italy Lit	2086	2051
Japan Yen	221.23	214.30
Malta	0.686	0.627
Netherlands Gld	3.558	3.245
New Zealand \$	2.93	2.93
Norway Kr	11.70	11.70
Portugal Esc	316.03	284.00
Spain Ptas	8.86	8.30
Sweden Kr	262.29	263.50
Switzerland Fr	13.98	12.78
Turkey Lira	337.97	317.69
USA \$	1.785	1.840

Notes: For small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

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As the stock market bounds upwards, spare a thought for those bemused investment managers who turned bearish months, and even years, ago. Their customers are beginning to turn nasty. Witness the decision of Surrey County Council to seek new handlers for its £750 million pension fund.

Surrey chose to parcel out its business among three managers who would all have claimed to be adopting the value approach to fund management, but who have conspicuously failed to deliver it to this client.

The trio of Mercury Asset Management, Gartmore and PDM have, according to the disgruntled client, failed to outperform the CAPS median by 1 per cent over five years.

Both Gartmore and Mercury have acknowledged that they have been misjudging the market and have tweaked their stance and the way they apply it. Tony Dye and his colleagues at PDM have remained resolutely convinced of the logic of their arguments and waited for the market to collapse — spectators at the party where others have been having a high time.

Pension fund trustees are generally a cautious bunch, and they tend to the view that if they put their trust in the giants of the industry they cannot be blamed for the results. Just to double bank on this, they generally pay a consultancy for reassurance on this point, and it is forthcoming

Fund managers in a Surrey state

for exactly the same safety-first reasons. But as the under-performance drags on, some trustees will begin to feel that they have a duty to look elsewhere, just as Surrey is doing.

Losing this little bit of business is not going to concern Mercury overly, although it may cause a little shiver amongst the thunderers at Merrill Lynch, which has just paid £3 billion for the fund manager. And Gartmore's parent, National Westminster, will not be pleased to see business drifting away after the costly exodus it has just had to make from the equities business.

But the disquiet must be greatest at UBS, the Swiss parent of PDM. The bank has remained a stoically supportive, if relatively silent, backer of Mr Dye as his determined pessimism has seen his clients lose money. As the stock market shrugs off even the dire goings-on in the Far East, that stoicism will be coming under new pressure.

The strategy of seeking out undervalued stocks makes sense and, as Mr Dye knows only too well, it requires the nerve to take a long-term view. But clients such as Surrey would contend that five years is a reasonably

long term over which to measure performance, and the PDM strategy has not delivered.

As GEC and Reuters decide to shower cash upon their shareholders, sending their stock soaring in response, too many of the companies where PDM spotted value are looking distinctly miserable. The only way that Laura Ashley, for instance, is going to provide value now is for those who can pick up a bargain in the stores.

Feel at liberty to vote for Cassidy

The struggle to save Denis Cassidy's job as chairman of Liberty is beginning to look more of a close call than seemed possible. With the family shareholders divided, next Thursday's extraordinary meeting shows encouraging signs of being a lively affair.

With 47 per cent of the votes

COMMENTARY

by our City Editor



already tucked away, the strange pairing of Elizabeth Stewart-Liberty and Brian Myerson remains favourite to have its way and to force Mr Cassidy's departure. But it is just about possible to see this contest as carefully balanced. After detailed scrutiny of its share register, Liberty reckons 31 per of its shares is in the hands of institutions. Another 16 per cent is owned by the 30 or so family members who do not belong to the Stewart-Liberty Five. If the institutions and the outer family all back the board, the score is 47 all and Mr Cassidy's fate lies with the private shareholders who own the balance of 6 per cent.

One must not get carried away. Mr Cassidy still has a long way to go even on his own claim that he has the declared support of holders of 34 per cent of the company. Moreover, that claim is not backed up by hard numbers; the promised support from institutions may well fail to

materialise.

Yet on the merits of the arguments, Mr Cassidy deserves to win. None of those involved seem to doubt that extensive redevelopment is needed at Liberty's neo-Tudor store. Mr Myerson has complained about the £43 million cost — a staggering sum, but one with which he had few quibbles a few months ago. Mr Myerson's principle objection to Mr Cassidy seems to be his unwillingness to take up Mr M's questionable proposals. Liberty's shares have been sold by performers but it is unfair to lay that at the door of Mr Cassidy. The store's results have shown some signs of recovery, but in truth it is still too early to judge the success of the changes he has overseen.

Why on earth Mrs Stewart-Liberty is working with Mr Myerson remains unfathomable. Mr Myerson has had his money tied up a long time and no doubt wants a profitable exit

That aim is unlikely to sit easily with any intention she may have to re-instate her stepsons as the management of Liberty.

Mr Cassidy still looks likely to lose his job. But while Mr Myerson may have the weight of money on his side, Mr Cassidy has the force of the arguments. Undecided investors should give their chairman their backing.

America's new Asian model

Triumphalist Western reactions to the crisis among Asia's tiger economies are increasingly bearing out the conspiracy theories of Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad. In America's geopolitics, the rise of Asian economies had become a threat to Western ascendancy, rather than a boost to global living standards.

Even Asian propagandists would, however, be hard put to out-do Mickey Kantor, who was America's chief brinkman in the last endless round of trade talks. Speaking at Wednesday's CBI dinner, the former US Commerce Secretary said the troubles of the tiger economies offered a golden opportunity for the West

to reassert its commercial interests. When countries seek help from the International Monetary Fund, Europe and America should use the IMF as a battering ram to gain advantage.

The agenda includes deregulation, privatisation, the break-up of conglomerates plus "accountability and transparency", which embrace banning non-tariff barriers, opening banking to Western entry and clamping down on business/government links, which breed corruption.

Mr Kantor, though out of office, echoes views emanating from the IMF to the Federal Reserve. America only tolerated the Asian model, he claims, because of the Cold War. In the economic cold war, yesterday's friends are targets. The next trade round, he says, should start with Europe and North America ganging up on Japan, then force a four-way fix on everyone else.

One Lord a leaping

NO DOUBT he took an enormous amount of persuading, but Lord Hanson has graciously agreed not to desert his opportunistic company, now a much-reduced version of the conglomerate. The £25,000-a-year salary he will receive as chairman emeritus can hardly have been the deciding factor but the sprightly peer will surely insist on earning his pay. If the management think they are getting a mere figurehead, they could be surprised.

Reuters to return £1.5bn to investors

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

REUTERS, the international news and information group, yesterday announced a capital restructuring designed to return £1.5 billion in excess capital to shareholders.

The move was welcomed in the City and Reuters shares rose 30½p to 710p, a 4.5 per cent increase in value compared with a 2.5 per cent rise in the stock market overall.

Reuters made clear that it saw its existing markets, primarily the different segments of the wholesale finance industry worldwide, as being already "sufficiently broad and demanding" and that it intended to maintain its present focused approach.

Rob Rowley, finance director, said the restructuring, under which a new holding company called Reuters Group will acquire Reuters Holdings, was in effect a way of bringing forward the abolition of ACT which would have otherwise made such a distribution impractical.

Mr Rowley said: "Reuters is not a mega-acquisition com-

pany. It's about understanding technology and applying it." The company expands mainly through organic growth and spends over £500 million a year on capital expenditure and research and development.

Under the plan, ordinary shareholders will receive 13 shares in Reuters Group plus £13.60 in cash for every 15 shares held. American depositary share holders will receive 13 new ADS plus the US dollar equivalent of £13.60 in cash for every 15 ADS held.

At the end of June Reuters had net cash of over £1.2 billion in spite of spending £1.27 billion on capital equipment and acquisitions in the three years to the end of 1996.

At the end of the exercise Reuters will have debt of around £200 million. Reuters said shareholder value would be enhanced through a reduction in Reuters cost of capital.

The restructuring will involve a one-off charge of about £30 million, which will be taken against 1997 earnings.

Harvest hits Christian Salvesen

By FRASER NELSON

CHRISTIAN SALVESEN, the food processing and logistics company that halved in size after demerging Aggreko three months ago, yesterday said that a poor summer pea harvest has so far cost it £4.1 million.

The company, which relies on peas for 70 per cent of food profits, had to ship in more expensive foreign greens when the UK pea harvest fell 45 per cent in July and August.

Edward Roderick, chief executive, said that even if next year's pea crop recovers, the pea business — worth £30 million — is unlikely to recover fully until 1999.

Overall pre-tax profits in the six months to September 30 rose to £47.6 million, against £51.6 million for the larger group last time. Earnings were 10.5p (12.3p) a share.

An interim dividend of 3.9p, against the 20.8p delivered through the special dividend last time, is due on February 2. The shares strengthened 9p to 103p yesterday.

Honorary post for Hanson

By ADAM JONES

LORD HANSON is to become chairman emeritus at the demerged conglomerate when he retires as chairman at the end of the month. It is seen in the City as a "figurehead" role (See Commentary, this page).

Meanwhile, falling gold prices and other woes at its mining associates forced Hanson, which recently split in a four-way demerger, to write off a further £9.4 million in its third quarter. A write-down in assets at RGC, the Australian mining company, accounted for £4.9 million. The rest of the £9.4 million write-off was from a fall in the market value of Goldfields, an Australian associate.

The building materials and aggregates company is moving to a December 31 financial year-end. It reported pre-tax profits of £131.1 million for the nine months to September 30, held back by exceptional charges from the mining interests, which totalled £38.5 million.

Travel Group anxiety depresses Reed shares

SHARES in Reed International, the UK arm of Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch information and publishing group, yesterday fell 25½p to 618p, yesterday continuing anxiety over amid continuing anxiety over previously announced problems in Reed Travel Group (see Raymond Snoddy writes).

Reed Elsevier made clear in trading statement yesterday that there would be "substantial provisions" because of exaggerated circulation claims by Reed Elsevier in limited by Analysts expected that the scale

of the problem has not been quantified and were worried that there could be litigation.

It did become clear yesterday that the company hopes to decide on a purchaser for its IPC consumer magazines division before the end of the year. The deal could raise more than £800 million for Reed Elsevier.

Indicative offers are expected shortly, and, if the sums suggested are considered satisfactory, Reed Elsevier plans to move quickly to conclude a transaction early in 1998.

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BUSINESS LINK

My company's doing well, but could it do better?

My profits are up, but could they be higher?

My staff are good, but do they need further training?

My customers seem happy, but what if they go elsewhere?

YOUR COMPANY IS BUSIER THAN IT'S EVER BEEN. SO WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?



BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES FOR WALES, SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND CAN ALSO BE CONTACTED THROUGH THE BUSINESS LINK NUMBER.

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Stock Market Writer
of the YearDogfight over Dalgety
could raise price to £1bn

DALGETY climbed 13p to 285p in the growing belief that it may soon be carved up like a tin of its own dog food by its two biggest rivals.

This latest flurry of activity was sparked by comments from Peter Brabeck, Nestlé's chief executive, who said the Swiss group was planning to expand aggressively into three main areas: mineral water, ice cream and poultry.

Nestlé is already one of the biggest pet food suppliers in the world, but a poor third in Europe behind Dalgety's Spillers, which includes Felix and Winalot, and Mars with its Whiskas brand.

It is known that Associated British Foods, 1p firmer at 55p, would be interested in Dalgety's millings operation and might also be prepared to pick up the rest, including food ingredients and Martin Brower, which supplies McDonald's.

These two alone could fetch £400 million. Nestlé would be left to take on the pet foods side. A break-up bid could be worth up to 350p a share, valuing Dalgety at more than £1 billion.

Elsewhere, it looked as if the traditional pre-Christmas rally had arrived early as share prices raced away, surging back above the 5,000 level to close at their best of the day.

The FTSE 100 index closed 111.6 higher at 5,082.3 fuelled by the opening rise for the Dow Jones industrial average on Wall Street. Total turnover reached a healthy 937 million shares. Dealers say that bids among second-liners have helped to drive up the market.

It was giveaway day for many investors with a total of £1.8 billion being returned to shareholders in both Reuters, up 20p at 403p, and GEC, 13p better at 403p.

It was the second attempt to return value to shareholders for Reuters, after a previous attempt last year was blocked by Kenneth Clarke, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer. GEC is floating off GEC Alsthom and returning £300 million by share buyback.

Reckitt & Colman was driven 70p higher in a thin market to 955p as talk of a bid soon from cash-rich Unilever was revived.

The overnight rise for the Hang Seng in Hong Kong gave a fillip to HSBC, up 7p at £16.72, and Standard Chartered, 3p to 750p. The rest of the banking sector enjoyed a



Stephen Riley, of Denby Group, 12.1p higher

fresh wave of speculative buying, with NatWest 22p higher at 925p on persistent talk of a bid for it. ABN Amro, the Dutch bank, has been mentioned and it is known to have had talks with Abbey National, up 22p at 955p. Its name has also been linked with Barclays, up 42p at £15.30, and the Prudential, 29p better at 709p.

Northern Rock broke through the 500p level for the first time since floating earlier this year with a rise of 12p at 505p. There were also gains for Alliance & Leicester, 19p to 752p, Halifax, 13p to 725p, Lloyds TSB, 10p to 725p, Royal Bank of Scotland, 29p to 720p, and Woolwich, 10p to 312p.

Lehman Brothers has upgraded its recommendation in shares of Securicor from "neu-

tral" to "outperform" ahead of results later this month. The shares rose 12p to 284p.

A healthy increase in profits last year and encouraging comments about current trading lifted Denby Group, headed by Stephen Riley, chief executive, 12.1p to 155p.

Racal Electronics firmed 3p to 222p on news of the sale of its health and safety division for £43.2 million.

AEA Technology, still celebrating the move by the FTSE steering committee to create a new sector for investment technology companies, put on 40p to 483p.

Britax International marked time at 127p after Panmure Gordon, the company's own broker, lifted its profit forecast.

Plans to increase brick production next year by one third lifted Blockleys 3p to 52p.

A government survey indicating signs of a slowdown in construction orders took its toll on the sector. Bellway fell 1p to 332p, Tibury Down 1p to 213p, Hepworth 1p to 238p, Polytype 3p to 203p, and Tarmac 2p to 113p.

Shares of Boustead, the rubber plantations group, were required at 20p and closed at 21p. They were suspended in September at 16p.

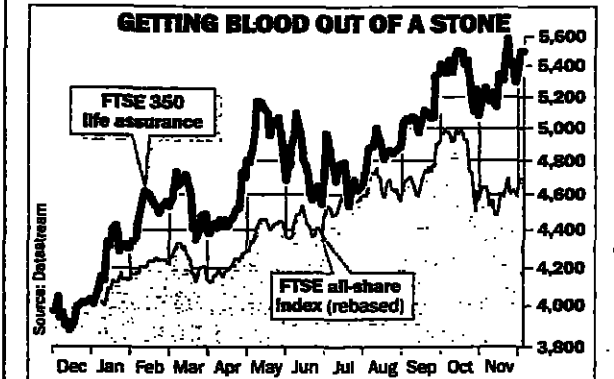
London Clubs lost 2p to 275p, despite suggestions that the casino group will use today's interim results to give an upbeat appraisal of its move into Las Vegas.

GILT-EDGED: There was an almost audible sigh of relief at the decision of the Bank of England to peg interest rates. It meant that the bond market was able to recover all of Wednesday's losses, with the best gains seen at the shorter end, resulting in a flattening of the yield curve.

In the futures pit the March series of the long gilt rose £1.2 to £120.22 in margin trading that saw 52,000 contracts completed.

In long Treasury 8 per cent 2021 finished £1.8 better at £119.12, while at the shorter end Treasury 7 per cent 2002 sported a gain of £1.2 at £101.32.

NEW YORK: The firm bond market, absence of rate rises in Europe and a rebound in South Korean and Hong Kong stocks bolstered sentiment, traders said. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 79.82 points higher at 8,111.83.



GETTING BLOOD OUT OF A STONE

FTSE 350 life assurance
FTSE all-share index (rebased)

Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov

Making money out of the Government's new individual savings accounts could be like trying to get blood out of a stone. That is the conclusion of David Nisbet at NatWest Markets in a report entitled ISAs: Trick or Treat?

Nisbet's initial impression is that the introduction of these new savings schemes, brought into place by the existing Peps and Tassas, will be bad news for the home service companies such as Pearl Assurance, Britannic, 2p firmer at £10.15, London & Manchester, unchanged at

500p, and Royal London. But the effect on the other life insurers would be at best neutral. These include Prudential, up 29p at 709p, Legal & General, 9p better at 521p, Norwich Union, 25p stronger at 393p on takeover hopes, and Sun Life, 15p higher at 418p.

"The less well-off savers may turn to the banks or building societies to open their accounts. They are unlikely to turn to the home service companies. But even those that attract savers may find it such low margin that they struggle to make a profit," he said.

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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):

Dow Jones 8111.83 (+79.82)

S&P Composite 982.08 (+4.21)

Tokyo:

Nikkei Average 16306.79 (+278.72)

Hong Kong:

Hang Seng 11474.94 (+207.39)

Amsterdam:

AEX Index 918.73 (+9.28)

Sydney:

ASX 2552.5 (+9.9)

Frankfurt:

DAX 4199.80 (+56.91)

Singapore:

Straits 1700.23 (+3.94)

Brussels:

General 14124.13 (+94.57)

Paris:

CAC-40 2914.45 (+12.18)

Zurich:

SIX Gen 1288.50 (+9.48)

London:

FT 30 3264.41 (+57.8)

FTSE 100 5082.3 (+111.6)

FTSE 250 4724.5 (+34.1)

FTSE 350 3452.8 (+46.5)

FTSE Euroshare 100 2649.41 (+22.92)

FTSE All-Share 2385.05 (+43.48)

FTSE Non Financials 2404.99 (+35.52)

FTSE Real Estate 132.37 (+0.30)

FTSE Govt Secs 100.48 (+0.22)

Bargains 9326

LEAD Volume 1,670 (+0.07)

German Mark 2.9670 (+0.0103)

Exchange Index 104.9 (-0.4)

Bank of England official close (4pm)

E.C.U. 1.5033

L.S.D.R. 1.2370

RPI 199.5 Oct (1.7%) Jan 1997/100

RPIX 157.9 Oct (2.9%) Jan 1997/100

RECENT ISSUES

Advance UK Tel 100p

BCH Group 199p

BG 'B' 30p

Boustead 104p

CRG 120p

Crested Ops Trust 11p

Cresco International 153p

Fleming Geared Units 77p

Forefront Tech Wts 30p

Forefront Tech 100p

Metalsrusstia 73p

Miniplanet Systems 57p

Northern Bertram 120p

Nottingham Forest 54p

Range Cooker 6p

Savoy Asset Mgmt 113p

Seascope Shipping 253p

Terra 175p

Workplace Tech 195p

RIGHTS ISSUES

Green Prop n/p (350) 32

MAJOR CHANGES

RISKS:

Abacus Recruit 159p (+1.55p)

AEA Tech 483p (+4.00p)

Denby Grp 155p (+12.1p)

Norwich Union 383p (+2.5p)

Castings 227p (+1.4p)

Bk of Ireland 867p (+49p)

Irish Farm 315p (+17p)

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TEMPUS
French fudge

MORE cash is something GEC does not need, yet it should bank another £375 million after tax from the flotation of GEC Alsthom, its joint venture with Alcatel Alsthom of France. A share buyback of £300 million is a mere bagatelle in the context of GEC, which will need to find a home for the flotation proceeds if the extra cash is not to dilute earnings by 4 to 5 per cent in the 1998-99 financial year.

However, GEC is right to distance itself from the Anglo-French joint venture heavy engineering is a low-profit cyclical business with little connection to defence electronics. But the market's warm reception yesterday had as much to do with signs of activity as any real understanding of what GEC will look like in five years.

GEC's recent buying record is not good. It was blown out of the water at an embarrass-

ingly early stage in the bidding for Siemens defence electronics arm. Investors would like a big American defence deal to avoid GEC being sidelined in future European restructuring, but hand-wringing over high valuations is also slowing progress in the USA, admits George Simpson, managing director.

Mr Simpson may have preferred a full denouement of GEC Alsthom. But to satisfy Alcatel's desire for cash, it is stuck with a minority stake in a quoted French turbine maker. This is an irritation when GEC needs to build its position in defence and industrial electronics. The float plan is a fudge, but GEC shares rose more than 3 per cent yesterday, an indication of the market's hunger for corporate activity. It looks fairly valued on a prospective p/e of about 16.7 to 16.8 for the year but hope of more deals could boost the shares short term.

GUS

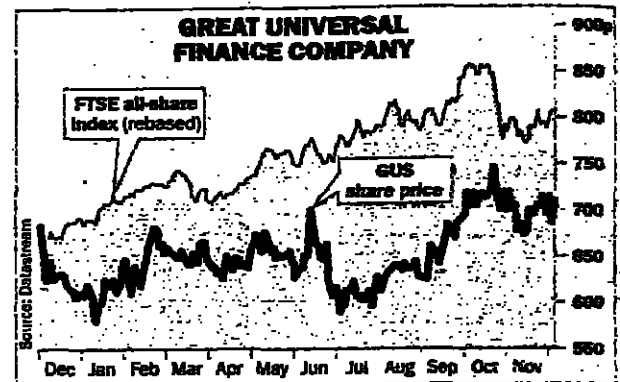
THE reason for the Japanese obsession with Burberry is mysterious, but the Asian country's continuing financial implosion bodes ill for the retailer. This is unfortunate, not just for the short-term profit impact but because it will delay the timing of the flotation of Burberry.

GUS has made no public statement about a sale but the logic of spinning off or selling the brand is compelling. Yesterday's figures reveal that GUS is transforming itself into something more like a financial and business services group than a retailer. The profit contribution from treasury operations will soon equal home shopping in the UK, and strong growth from Experian provides GUS with every reason to focus invest-

ment further on information services. Of course, GUS is also investing heavily in home shopping in a bid to generate more sales.

The strategy seems to be working, although GUS is inevitably paying a price in increased debt and higher fixed costs. Nevertheless, a 6 per cent rise in sales from a business that was

static or declining is a promising turnaround. It makes little sense for GUS to own Burberry, a business that would attract a hefty premium from an Asian investor, but the timing is not right. The principal job facing its new chief, Rose Marie Bravo, should be to groom it for sale. In the meantime, GUS is well worth backing.



GREAT UNIVERSAL FINANCE COMPANY

FTSE all-share index (rebased)
GUS share price

Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov

P&O

THERE are two sound reasons to sell a business today. Either the offer on the table is too good to refuse or the outlook is too poor to justify keeping it. In the case of Bovis, the housebuilder floated by P&O yesterday, neither reason seems applicable. Bovis is a fine housebuilder doing business in an average market. Unfortunately, housebuilder ratings are poor because investors fear higher interest rates and a downturn. There are too many quoted builders and Bovis has been priced to go at a mere 8.9 times forward earnings.

Having told the world Bovis was to float, P&O was reluctant to delay the sale but it always had the option of demerger. Concerns that P&O's army of small investors would dump the shares seem spurious. Private investors are more cautious and would probably have waited for recovery or a bid for the

business. Instead, the institutions who picked up the stock for a song will benefit when the rating recovers in a year's time.

The reality is that P&O wanted the cash to buy cruise ships where the group is today earning impressive returns. Orders for more giant floating palaces are likely but investors should remember that big ships take years to build and consumer confidence changes fast. The shares are not to be chased.

Stakis

STAKIS received a pasting yesterday after revealing dull figures and the treatment seems undeserved. The reaction was all the more surprising given the reputation David Michels, its chief executive, has established since he took the helm of the once-ailing Glasgow-based company in 1991.

West must respond to threat of sick tiger disease in Asia

The crisis in the Far East economies could inflict real damage to growth and profit margins all over the world

Japan has announced what is likely to prove open-ended public protection for bank depositors, and the London market seems to have concluded that this is the end of its Asian nightmares. Japan can clean out its own Augean stable and London can get on with its cash-driven bull run. There is no shadow here of the other Asian news of the week: the fierce austerity imposed by the IMF bail-out for Korea, and its reflection in cutbacks in two huge Korean projects in the UK. This seems perverse. The truth is that the Japanese banking crisis, more than ten years in the making, has never posed much of an external threat, provided that it was sensibly tackled. But the setback in the former "tiger" economies of the Asian group, which has roused few echoes on this side of the globe, must do real damage to growth, and to profit margins, all over the world. It has already inflicted a probably fatal defeat on President Clinton's drive for freer trade, and could revive protectionism in Europe. True, the initial impact will be greatest in Japan (which must feel haunted) and in the US and Germany; but in a global economy, nobody is immune.

The Japanese "crisis" is simply an exaggerated replay of that epic American non-event, the Savings and Loans collapse of the 1980s — "Mad Finance, Part II" perhaps. Both are sagas of unsound lending financed with wholesale money. In both cases, the authorities were fully aware of the trouble at an early stage, but in both decided to settle for a sharp lecture, and the hope that ill-managed institutions could contrive their own salvation.

And the result was the same in both countries. The wounded banks were driven to ever higher risks in their search for profit, so what had started as a crisis grew into a catastrophe. And in the end, when bankers started going to prison and the truth could no longer be masked, the governments have found the same answer: a bail-out. The cost will be a large increase in the national debt, but better that than to allow millions of savers watch their assets vanish into a black hole.

This appears to be a catastrophe without victims, apart from the guilty managers and their shareholders. There is some budgetary constraint on the interest on the bail-out funds (some \$200 billion — £120 million — in the US, a larger but still unmeasured sum in Japan) is a permanent addition to public spending. But the "priming" of so much money has had no impact on activity, or even on inflation: it simply ensured that the savers still owned the funds they thought they held in the first place. Not even the construction industry was much affected: the banks took over the lead role in housing finance. The world was right to shrug off the S&L crisis, and will be right to ignore Japan.

At first sight, the "tigers" have caught exactly the same disease: unwise lending by ill-supervised banks. In fact, however, the similarity is only skin-deep. The differences, which are vital, are shown up under those normally dry book-keeper's headings,



Michel Camdessus, left, of the IMF, and South Korea's Lim Chang Yuel sign a \$55 billion rescue deal

"sources and uses of funds". The S&Ls in the US and the Japanese banks borrowed at home so their liabilities (and their problems) were domestic. The tiger banks borrowed heavily in Tokyo and New York, so their problems are international. Equally, the lending in the US and Japan went mainly to fund financial asset bubbles, or excessive speculative building. Bad luck for domestic investors.

Stock markets have also collapsed in the tiger economies and there is, too, a large legacy of empty skyscrapers — domestic woes, for the most part. But a great deal also went to ill-judged industrial expansion, above all in electronics, but across a wide range of other industries intended to serve a booming Asian market that is no longer booming.

In short, the tiger economies are

sure, nepotism and outright bribes. This would have been enough to guarantee disaster, but it took a regime of pegged exchange rates to make it international (note that Singapore, which has proved relatively immune, floated its exchange when imported financial inflation first threatened).

With exchange rates apparently immovably fixed to the dollar, or to the yen, it has seemed prudent and risk-free to borrow in New York or Tokyo, where interest rates were lower (much lower in the case of the yen) than those charged domestically. As a result, the tiger banks have found that as their loans began to turn bad, they were facing large short-term foreign liabilities. The major cause of the devaluations of the tiger currencies was not, as Datuk Seri Dr Mahatir Mohamed, Prime Minister of Malaysia, has

claimed, the machinations of New York hedge funds. It was the desperate efforts of their own banks to hedge their foreign currency liabilities. Those who moved fastest have lost least.

Now for the economic fallout. The sheer scale of the Asian investment boom of the last decade can be seen in the table. Asian and Chinese investment grew nearly fivefold in the decade to 1996, Korean spending nearly sixfold, while spending in the old industrial world barely doubled. In the present crisis of financial panic and industrial overcapacity, investment spending could easily fall back to 1986 levels (when China faced a crisis in 1990 investment fell by some 94 per cent). This alone could impose a deflationary shock of more than \$500 billion (£300 million) on the world economy. The biggest shock would be in the most successful exporters of capital equip-

ment — Japan (which shipped some \$95 billion in 1986), the US and Germany. Small wonder that official forecasts for world growth have already been revised down by about 0.5 per cent; on past experience of shocks, this first estimate is much too optimistic. Some US pundits are already comparing the current crisis with the great deflation of the last third of the 19th century, when new competition from the US interior, Australia and South America drove commodity prices down 40 per cent over 30 years, and caused worldwide deflation and near-stagnation. But that, according to the evidence of David Hale of Zurich Insurance to the US House Banking Committee last month, is too gloomy. A century ago we were on the gold standard, and money supply could not grow in step with output; now, with paper money, we can reflate (however it may, as we have just seen in Japan, take a major crisis to remind central bankers of the inflationary duties).

It is the threat to profit margins that is probably the more insidious. Competition from the tigers made good headlines, but it remained a minor cloud as long as their currencies were strong, and Asian demand was expected to absorb their output. Now, though, it looks a major threat to the West not just in electronics and cars, but in footwear, steel, petrochemicals and textiles. When this provokes a new wave of plant closures and downsizing, the politicians (unlike the central bankers) will be under pressure to do just the wrong thing: trade protection. President Clinton's defeat over fast-track trade authority could be a small first step: the reminder here is not 19th century stagnation, but the role of the Smoot-Hawley Act (US trade protection) in the great inter-war slump.

Another exaggerated nightmare? Very probably — though a major devaluation by China, already much discussed, would certainly make things worse. But even on its own, the tiger crisis remains a real one. The threat to world growth (and still more, in a stock market context, to profit margins) is surely real enough to justify some reaction in Western stock markets. So far there has been virtually none.

Pilot error

THEY are meeting today to consider the succession at Airbus Industrie, which must under its own rules lose Jean Pierson as managing director from next March. The MD at Airbus has always been French, the chairman German — don't ask why, but a Brit never gets a look-in.

But I hear there has been a problem. Pierson was expected to be replaced by Noel Forgerd, head of Lagardère, the French defence group, except that Forgerd is close to Jacques Chirac, the French President. And Chirac has fallen out with Lionel Jospin,

the Prime Minister, over the former's habit of waying through such appointments to his chums. There are a couple of other Frenchmen in the frame but not much fancied. But one solution is being mooted. They could give the chairmanship to Pierson, and the managing directorship to a German.

KELVIN MACKENZIE, celebrated former editor of The Sun, once famously sacked his astrology columnist with a memo that started "As you will already know..." Surely some similar presentiment of doom should have tipped off Philippa Sage, of Pwsey, Wiltshire, banned from trading for seven years after a Bristol Industrial tribunal heard that staff at her employment agency had repeatedly not been paid. It supplied clairvoyants, palm readers and other entertainers.

Bank Roll

A GLITTERING gathering at the Bank on Wednesday night for the 90th birthday celebrations for Lord Roll of Ipsden, chairman of SG Warburg from 1974 to 1983, who still turns up at the office of SBC Warburg Dillon Read most days. The host was Sir David



Scholey, a member of the Court of the Bank, and the venue the Court Room. The guest list was a Who's Who of banking and politics over the past two decades. Sir Samuel Brittan, Lord and Lady Callaghan, Mr and Mrs Eddie George, Sir Edward Heath and Lord and Lady Howe. Even Jacques de Larosière, paying a welcome visit to these shores, and Helmut Schmidt.

Teed off

"A GOOD walk ruined" was Dr Johnson's apt dismissal of golf. But the sport has a great appeal for accountants, being, I suppose, almost as dull as they are, so a couple of magazines have launched an annual tournament for the profession. All you need are a

recognised handicap and "preferable" membership of a golf club. Plus minimal personal skills, of course. The Accountancy Age Masters 1998 "promises to be one of the most prestigious golfing events in the accountancy calendar". And almost as exciting as the annual Institute of Chartered Accountants dinner. I am not sure I can contain my excitement.

I AM gently taken to task by Jonathan Haslam, editor of corporate affairs in the London Metal Exchange, from next Monday, over my suggestion yesterday that I might arrive friendless at the LME from Whitehall. A colleague turned up from the Civil Service with a giant yucca plant in tow. He is making the same trip accompanied by two prints by Howard Hodgkin which adorned his wall at the Education Department. Hodgkin is an avant-garde artist of the old school, which means he was terribly challenging before they started picking sharks.

One is a sunset, all "vibrant reds and yellows," the other an afternoon scene in Morocco, and both are rolled up chez Haslam, awaiting the framer. Very nice, but could they not stay there? Alas, Mrs Haslam will not have them in the house. Says Haslam: "It's not her style of art — she's rather more traditionalist."

Thorny issue

DAVID MICHELS, chief executive of Scottish hotel group Stakis, does not normally dodge a question. But asked yesterday whether he might be interested in buying Thistle Hotels, he came up with some corporate verbiage about looking at everything in pursuit of shareholder value. Sure. A more telling admission, perhaps, from Neil Chisman, Stakis finance director: "There was something in the Scottish press about it earlier this week, but most of our employees thought they were talking about Partick Thistle."

MARTIN WALLER



David Michels declined to say whether he planned to grasp the Thistle

Low-key bank builds bridges in markets as EMU approaches

Alasdair Murray on the job scheme that may raise the EIB's profile

The European Investment Bank does not deal in small change. The financing arm of the European Union has just agreed loans totalling £1 billion for a series of UK infrastructure projects, including £600 million alone for Rail-track. Total loans to the UK this year are expected to amount to about 2.5 billion (£1.67 billion) out of an annual loan budget of 23 billion.

The EIB uses its cast-iron AAA credit rating to raise this money itself on the European capital markets, ensuring that the organisation is classed as the largest non-sovereign borrower in the world. The EIB has had a hand in just about every big infrastructure project in the UK over the past decade from Canary Wharf to the Channel Tunnel via the Skye toll bridge and the latest Severn bridge. Yet for all its financial clout the EIB, which is owned by the 15 EU member countries, has cut a surprisingly low profile. Sir Brian Urwin, the bank's British president, has been content to leave the often less than flattering headlines to other EU-backed organisations such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

This backroom role, however, looks set to be cast aside in the final run-up to monetary union. The European Union has charged the Bank, which was established to encourage even development across the Common Market, with promoting the single currency.

The bank created a wave of market interest this year when it became the first institution to issue a euro-based bond. However, it is the EIB's enhanced role in pursuing job creation policies that is most likely to force it out of the shadows. No longer chiefly restricted to funding infrastructure projects, the Bank has been given a mandate to invest in areas as diverse as health and high-tech start-ups.

The genesis of this transformation can be traced to the Amsterdam EU summit in June. A Franco-German split over job creation threatened to scupper the European Monetary Union stability pact — a German-inspired plan designed to set tough fiscal controls on EMU member governments. It required the personal intervention of Sir Brian, with a plan for the EIB to develop specific employment-generating projects, to help to smooth over some of the political differences between the two countries.

The EIB reported back to the EU Council of Ministers at the Luxembourg summit last month, outlining a series of

schemes that will target the regions most likely to suffer from the structural dislocation that EMU is expected to cause. The package will take the EIB into virgin territory. It is committing 1.3 billion to health, education and urban environment projects, which the EIB believes are both vital to improving local infrastructure and are employment-intensive.

The EIB has further earmarked a billion to invest in high-tech start-ups. About 125 million has already been dedicated to the bank's first foray into the risky arena of venture capital through a dedicated fund. But the EIB, which is restricted from investing directly in equity, will maintain an arms-length approach towards the fund using its sister organisation, the European Investment Fund, to administer the money. Sir Brian estimates this initial funding can be leveraged to about 800 million, providing much-needed capital in many European countries that are currently starved of venture fund backing.

The remaining money will be distributed through a range of other outlets and the EIB is especially keen to tap into UK expertise. The EIB has already held talks with the Department of Trade and Industry and venture capital funds but

believes that the clearing banks are probably the best channel for this financing.

The jobs programme has an initial three-year term, though it is likely to be rolled over for at least another term when it expires at the end of 2000. Sir Brian, however, is acutely aware that the EIB can only scratch the surface of Europe's unemployment problem. "We can't solve the unemployment problem, but we are making a visible and tangible contribution that is extremely important in political terms," he says.

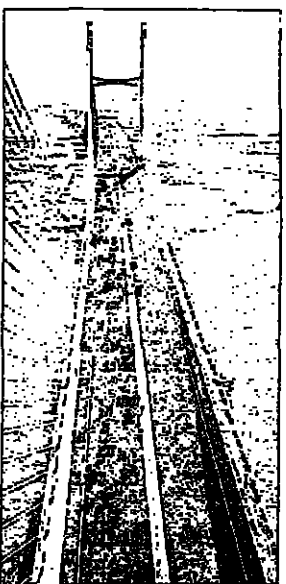
"It is part of a wider strategy for solving the problem, although the ultimate onus remains on member states to work on their macroeconomic and structural policies."

Job creation is, however, only one area in which the EIB expects to support EMU. Its size means that it is a huge and credible player in the capital markets. The bank believes that by beginning to issue some of its bonds in euros it can set the benchmark for future euro issues as well as establishing a market in the bonds.

"We want to boost confidence in monetary union and ensure there is a pool of euros in the market from the start," Sir Brian explains. The EIB's first issue earlier this year enjoyed such strong support that the bank increased its size from a billion to 1.3 billion to meet demand.

A series of "tributary" issues in individual currencies has also been made by the bank. These will be converted into euros once EMU is up and running. Sterling is to date the only notable absence, although Sir Brian makes clear that this is due to technical problems caused by the relatively high level of UK interest rates, rather than doubts over Britain's membership of a single currency.

Indeed the EIB emphasises that the UK's position on EMU is unlikely to be a threat to its relationship with either the City or the Government. Sir Brian believes the jobs package has the strong support of Gordon Brown, who is still keen on persuading the rest of Europe of the virtues of Britain's labour market policies. The EIB will also continue to rely heavily on the City's capital markets and a disproportionate amount of its borrowing is likely to continue to be denominated in sterling. Railtrack's £600 million merely serves to emphasise that the EIB is one European organisation that wants to continue to be a key player in the UK, whether we join EMU or not.



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Separate hi-fi products are replying to the challenge presented by the growth in mass-market mini systems. Jez Ford introduces a two-page report

Searching for the perfect sound

One warm July evening in 1878, Friedrich's Music Hall in Grand Rapids, Michigan, played host to an unusual musical challenge. Popular cornetist Jules Levy was joined on stage by one Mr Edison, who announced that his amazing phonograph would "talk, sing, crow, whistle, mimic the human voice in any language, and repeat cornet solos". Mr Edison's phonograph then trounced the cornetist, who packed up his instrument in its box and left the stage.

The experiment neatly defines the very meaning of hi-fi. High fidelity reproduction means what it says — making music sound as real as the moment it was recorded, bringing the performers through time and space into your own home.

Hi-fi went electronic after the war, when London's Tottenham Court Road was piled high with surplus circuits and valves. Flanders and Swann summed up how over-addictive the hobby could become: "With a tone control, at a single touch, I can make Caruso sound like 'Hutch'; they sang, adding 'but I never did care for music much.' The anorak-wearing hi-fi enthusiasts were born, amid a mess of technical circuits."

The boom period for high quality audio ran through the Sixties and Seventies, once convenient box 'infinite baffle' speakers had replaced awkward horn designs. It was

then that Japanese companies started producing kit.

"The market was very strong then," remembers Gordon Provan, now chairman of the British Federation of Audio. "The Japanese went for market share." The imports had the advantage of favourable exchange rates and mass production techniques to deliver high fidelity equipment at low prices in neat boxes. The anoraks never forgave them.

It was the start of a split between mass market and

secondary to shipping costs and other commercial considerations.

The argument of quality versus convenience intensified in the 1980s with the arrival of compact disc. Sold under the warranty of 'perfect sound forever', CDs could outperform vinyl with ease in a low-price system, and brought simplicity and durability to the equation.

Yet in an expensive system, the limitations of CD were obvious from day one — and vinyl albums undeniably car-

able to check the one thing essential to any music system — how it sounds.

On the other side of the fence are the hi-fi separates: individual CD players, amps and speakers. Ever wondered why these so often look like boring black boxes? Answer: they still follow the original aim of hi-fi. They have been designed to sound as good as possible, and while most manufacturers try to produce a pleasant exterior, every penny spent on cosmetics is a penny lost on sound.

Yet in recent years, mini and micro systems have risen to take more than 70 per cent of the £758 million UK audio market (GfK — Lek-trak figures to August this year). Is the flashy one-purchase system threatening to eclipse the very *raison d'être* of hi-fi?

"No way!" says Julian Richer, whose chain of hi-fi stores champions the superiority of separates. "We are seeing a phenomenal increase in interest in hi-fi separates. Consumers are realising the limitations of their systems."

"People get the sound they deserve," qualifies Tietenbrun. "Most people don't believe there is a difference. But if music is important to you, you should take a little time to listen."

It is a fair bet that if Mr Edison were to try his challenge in a theatre today, he wouldn't use a mini system.

Jez Ford is editor of What Hi-Fi? magazine



Separates on the shelf: enthusiasts argue that carefully matched components give better value than a mini system

'People get the sound they deserve. If music is important to you, you should take a little time to listen'

true hi-fi, an almost ideological schism still obvious today from the derision with which mini systems are regarded by manufacturers of 'mix and match' separates. They are made by large companies in the Far East producing in volume.

says Ivor Tietenbrun, boss of Scottish company Linn, and the man almost single-handedly responsible for the 'source first' revolution in 1970s hi-fi that switched the emphasis from quality speakers to quality sources. "Mini systems are made to meet a price point — actual sonic performance is

ry more musical information than the digital data on a compact disc.

Battle commenced, and the mass market attractions of CD won the day. Vinyl headed into what many thought was a terminal decline, then settled into a niche market where hi-fi LP logies and young dubland mixmasters find themselves unlikely fellow enthusiasts.

Today's hi-fi market has polarised. On the one side are the mini and micro systems — all-in-one solutions packed with gadgets and flashing lights, sold in high street stores where you will never be

A war is raging between specialist dealers who sell systems piece by piece and the high street chains

SET out to buy a television and you know more or less what you are letting yourself in for. It will have a screen of a size you specify and a selection from a fairly narrow set of features. There will be quality differences between brands, but the choices will be fairly well defined. Alvin Gold writes.

Systems used for sound reproduction pose a different set of problems. The equipment comes in a bewildering variety of guises, most of which use that magic phrase "high fidelity" to establish respectability.

There are systems constructed from separate hi-fi components, some good, some less so, and there is an enormous variety of packaged mini, midi and micro systems, lifestyle systems and others. Almost all of them claim to represent a close approach to the original sound.

Listen to them carefully, however, and you will find enormous differences. Many of them can be heard for what they are: shoddy monstrosities. A few are different, because they sound credibly like real musicians playing music.

The traditional dividing line lies between component-based hi-fi and one-make packaged systems, but it has become blurred

over the years. The typical packaged audio system has too many gadgets that are of little use to good music reproduction. Component hi-fi, conversely, is often pictured as complicated, difficult to match up and costly, though higher prices are probably reflected in better performance. The problem with component hi-fi is that it takes some expertise to buy and to sell. The brand names do not necessarily have instant recognition. Some expertise is needed to demonstrate, say, the difference between one CD player and the next, or why bigger loudspeakers are not necessarily better.

Good sound reproduction is not only about playing music to annoy passing bats. It is partly about communicating the beauty of music, without diminishing its impact at everyday volume levels.

One hallmark of a quality audio system is that it retains its



Hated by purists, loved by the public Kenwood mini systems start at £329.95

presence and clarity even when the volume is set low.

Buying a quality hi-fi system need not cost a fortune — you can buy a genuinely capable system

for about the price of a decent television — but it is necessarily more involved. A good dealer will establish your needs and provide advice, properly informed demonstrations and a full back-up service that may involve installing the system and exchanging components if they do not suit the customer's home. Problems of this kind often only appear after the equipment has been installed. This back-up can go well beyond the minimum requirements of consumer legislation.

Approach most high street electrical outlets for audio equipment and you are likely to be given a different story. Why bother with hi-fi separates when you can buy a single make system with everything you could possibly need? The idea is seductive.

The advantages are real, but there are problems, one of which is that many such systems are quite primitive internally and

paradoxically are often built with poorly matched internal components or loudspeakers.

Another is that such systems are dead-end purchases. A component system can be upgraded over the years and new technology incorporated as opportunities arise. Packaged systems rarely provide this flexibility. By contrast, Arcam, the UK's biggest maker of component high fidelity, is one of a number of producers whose CD players and other components can be upgraded.

There is a halfway house, identified originally by Denon a few years ago, which is now one of the fastest growing sectors of the systems market. These are systems based on what are, in effect, stylish mini-sized components, to which new ones can be added later.

There are also some exotically designed packaged systems with high-performance standards. The bottom line is that if you want quality you can find it in almost any form and a good dealer can steer you around the obstacles. BADA (the British Audio Dealers Association) has about 130 members nationwide who subscribe to a strict code of practice.

• BADA Telephone 0171-226 4044. E-mail BADA@compuserve.com.

It can be simple...

Alvin Gold outlines the important points to remember when buying components

TEN things you should know when buying hi-fi separates.

Source components

• If you are counting pennies, consider economising by reducing the number of source components. Do you really need a CD player, radio, cassette deck, MiniDisc recorder and a turntable?

• Consider simpler components: single cassette decks usually outperform twins and multideck players generally contribute more to complexity than musical pleasure. • Quality sound from radio is the prerogative of the FM band, and quality, hiss-free stereo FM depends on good, preferably roof-mounted aerials.

Amplifiers

• Power output is often less important than manufacturers would have you believe. Personal tastes, the nature of your room and the sensitivity of the speakers count here, but 50-70 watts per channel is a good starting point for lifetime volume levels in most rooms.

• Don't be put off by lack of facilities. Tone controls, for example, are rarely found on high quality amplifiers, but almost all

ways included with budget gear; draw your own conclusions.

Loudspeakers

• Bigger is not always better. Many simple, compact speakers sound better than large impressive-looking free standers.

• Avoid placing speakers behind the furniture as it will selectively absorb the high frequencies, smothering detail.

• Loudspeakers need proper support to perform at their best. Use quality pedestal stands for compact speakers (cost, £30 a pair) rather than shelves. Small blobs of Blu-Tack between speakers and stands work wonders. Also, use dedicated speaker cables rather than bellwire or mains cable.

• Large speakers are designed to be free standing, but usually sound best with carpet-piercing spikes, which won't damage carpets. • If you really, really want deep bass, but can't accommodate large loudspeakers, consider using compact with an active subwoofer (a specialised bass-only loudspeaker), which can often be hidden out of sight behind furniture without compromising performance.

The one essential for any great system

WHAT HI-FI?

MAKE YOUR OWN CD!

We unveil Philips' CD copier



No jargon. No worries. Just music.

WHAT HI-FI? sound advice

Buyer beware

Better watch out for the swindlers when shopping for a stereo

HAVE you been accosted on a garage forecourt with studio loudspeakers for sale, cheap? This is a popular scam and the speakers involved are invariably poorly built, with shabby enclosures and components, sometimes missing tweeters and crossovers.

As with confidence tricks in many other walks of life, there is no comeback. Some scams are harder to spot, and therefore more pernicious, and are to be found even in ostensibly legitimate areas.

The most infamous is the so-called "mug's eye".

which refers to packaged midi systems with unnecessary controls by the bucketful, and outside, underpowered multichannel loudspeakers.

A large number of unreliable hi-fi components and systems subscribe to similar values and far too many dealers are happy to pursue this lowest common denominator "male jewellery" approach.

With high fidelity, as with many other things in life, quality should always be the watchword.

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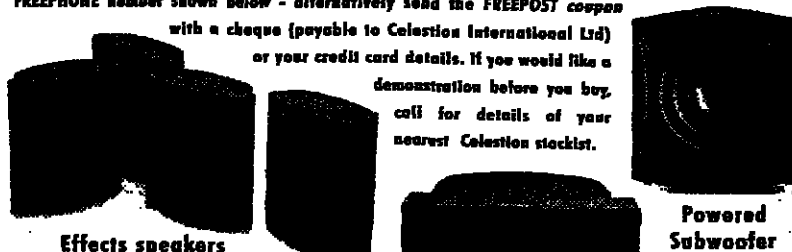
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CELESTION

**Jez Ford on
how new
technology will
transform our
listening and
viewing habits**

For every new audio innovation you see on *Tomorrow's World* that makes it into your home, there are dozens more that bite the dust between drawing board and living room.

Such new technologies have two faces — one smiling with the promise of new toys and better performance, the other showing worry lines at the thought of your current equipment becoming defunct, and the cost of replacing it. Many people still resent the sudden redundancy of their LP collections with the arrival of the CD.

But this is an exciting time for hi-fi, with a wealth of new ideas that promise improvements in performance plus the all-important back compatibility — new concepts that have been designed to sit happily with the old.

Take compact discs. There are two plans to improve their capability: the Digital Versatile Disc, and the Super Audio CD. The first, DVD, is a disc that looks just like a CD but contains video as well as audio. One disc can carry a whole movie with far better picture quality than your video recorder can offer, and digital surround sound. It is already out in the US and Japan and the first European players should be properly launched here in the spring. DVD players can also play normal CDs, and when DVDs eventually become recordable, you will be able to have a single box for all your music and movie needs.

The plans for Super Audio CD were announced in Japan just two weeks ago by the co-inventors of the original CD system, Philips and Sony. It uses a double-layer compact disc that plays normally in a standard CD player, but can produce vastly improved quality in the planned SACD players. Whether the SACD gets into a turf war with the audio capabilities of DVD will depend on how the companies involved can work together.

It's not just the software end



MiniDisc, Digital Versatile Disc, Super Audio CD and flat components are all set to revolutionise hi-fi in the UK

The future is richer, fuller — and flatter

of things that is getting a facelift. NKT, a company based in Cambridge, is leading the world with a new way of designing loudspeakers so that they are virtually flat. No more intrusive boxes cluttering up your lounge — NKT's design can hang on the wall disguised as paintings, or even be made to form part of the wall itself. "The future of audio and video is flat," says Farad Azima, NKT's chief executive. "Whether it's the TV and speakers at home or your computer in the office."

The first audio "flaties" should be available in the spring, and are likely to become a favourite in the growing market for high-tech multi-room installation. You tell a consultant where you want music and home cinema and how much you want to pay, and they deliver a total

home solution. Robert Taussig is a London dealer who belongs to CEDIA, a network of skilled installers. "It's not so much that it is new," he explains. "Rather that people are becoming more aware of what can be achieved."

The cheapest four-room installation would be about £5,000, he says, though consultations are free.

What of the humble cassette? There have been various attempts to replace its mediocre hi-fi performance with a digital recording format, but so far, none of them has quite

kicked it out of play. Its worldwide availability and standard appearance in car systems is likely to ensure its survival for a good few years to come.

Of its challengers, Sony's MiniDisc looks the brightest hope, a rewritable optical disc

that has taken Japan by storm and is making significant waves here. It is small enough for portability and extremely versatile — you can erase and reuse a whole disc or just individual tracks, rearranging songs and even adding text titles as digital information.

After the flop of its Digital Compact Cassette, Philips is fighting back with recordable CD, its new £500 CDR-870 recorder looking quite an attractive option given the price of £3 for blank CDRs. There is an undeniable thrill to making your own CDs, and of course, the digital copies are perfect.

Any glimpse into the future of hi-fi cannot ignore the Internet. A wealth of radio stations already broadcast live on the Net, though in very limited quality at present. Everything from Virgin Radio to Kathmandu FM is avail-

able, 24 hours a day anywhere in the world, though of course you will be paying local telephone on-line call charges while you listen, making it a rather expensive way to tune in to Chris Evans in the morning.

Last month, Sharp announced production of a mini system that connects to your PC and can download music from the Net direct to MiniDisc.

There are ever-increasing music resources online (try <http://www.luma.com> or <http://sony.com/music>), though with a standard modern connection it is still a slow business. One day you will shop for music by downloading low-quality samples free, then pay to get the Super Audio version copied to your hard drive. From there it can be converted, amplified and passed on to the invisible flat hi-fi speakers hidden in your walls for the ultimate in high-tech, high quality hi-fi.

For cheapskates and big spenders

Putting a system together for Christmas?

Dan Houston has advice to suit all pockets

Excellence in hi-fi does not have to cost the earth. As long as the components do not actually add anything nasty to the sound quality of your music collection you can get away with surprisingly little outlay.

The ultimate Audio Cheapskates system, based on CD-player, amplifier and speakers, could cost as little as £380. Start with Philips's 721 CD-player, still an excellent buy at £130 after two years on the market, with a surprisingly clear delivery.

To this add the Cambridge Audio AJ Mark MK III SE amplifier, which redefines value for money at £120. The amp is rated at 30 watts but still delivers plenty of power to the right loudspeakers and will even drive sound well in largeish rooms without a hint of distortion.

Designed in the UK, and built in China, it has four inputs, so you can't have that many sources. But it does have an optional phono stage for hooking up a record player.

The speakers that sound excellent with this are JPW's ML510s, at £130. They are just 33cm high, but you wouldn't know it when this system is kicking out some rock'n'roll or relaying an orchestra. The West Country firm makes all its products locally, using HM Prisons to do some of the cabinet making. At 89dB/Watt/metre they are very sensitive, allowing more detail through and giving a fuller sound. Site them slightly away from a wall — stands are best, or wall brackets.

Turntables are still popular

and second hand vinyl is superb value at present. The quality is often amazing. Mint condition records can be had for a few pounds.

Replay is important, though, and turntables should be made to last. They look extremely simple but all the work is in the engineering of the bearings and motor.



B&W's Emphasis speaker, at £6,495, uses a horn shape to absorb rearward-travelling sound waves

Up to £500 the deck to beat is the Rega 2 or 3 at £214 or £274. A similar approach to engineering with better-grade components comes from Nottingham Analogue, whose Interspace, at £500, rivals decks at more than twice its price. The motor is so weak that you have to give the platter a push by hand to get it started, but that means the motor's vibrational effect on the heavy platter is reduced to a minimum.

It's a gorgeous piece of engineering and benefits from being used with higher grade amp and speakers.

For bankers and buffs Michel Engineering's Orbe is a model of precision engineering. The price at £1,995 for the deck alone obviously makes this an enthusiast's quarry, but it is so good to listen to, you won't want to go to work.

One of the best CD players on the market under £500 is Rega's Planet at £398. It is a top loading player and designed so that any faulty part could easily be replaced. Audio Note's CD2 at £499 gives extraordinary sound quality that you can listen to for hours on end without feeling tired. At the top of the range, at £4,250, is the Digital Analogue Company Ultima.

Arcam's Alpha 8 £360 50W amplifier is a superb design delivering detail and drive with a gorgeously solid feel to the sound, but at £799 Exposure's Super XV amp puts the icing on the cake, giving that much extra base and treble performance to bring music into sharper relief. Of silly-money amps, Krell's KAV300 is the hot hatchback.

Competition in the speaker market is fierce. I would recommend the Acoustic Energy AE120 at £500. At £580, Castle's Severn 2 award-winning speaker is as dependable as the Yorkshiremen who make it.

At £1,520, Audio Note's type E/D loudspeakers have 95dB/W/M sensitivity which has you gasping at the level of detail they can relay. They are designed as matched pairs for perfect performance in stereo.

Lottery winners, however, may prefer a pair of hand-crafted B&W speakers. The ingenious Emphasis, at a mere £6,495 the pair, uses a horn shape to absorb sound. But better known is the top-of-the-range Nautilus, a snip at £35,000 for two. (B&W: 01903 750750.)

USEFUL NUMBERS

British Federation of Audio	0171-930 3206
British Audio Dealers Association	0171-226 4044
Digital Analogue Company	01903 750755
Exposure	01273 423877
Nottingham Analogue	01773 762947
Audio Note	01273 220511
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Michel Engineering	0181-953 0771
Arcam	01223 203203
JPW (Richer Sounds)	0171-827 9001
Philips	0181-689 2166
Cambridge Audio (Richer Sounds)	0171-827 9001
Rega Research	01702 333071

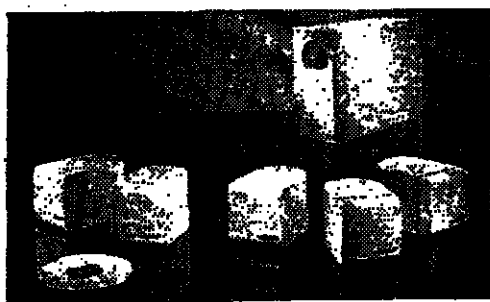
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You want to know what has been the least celebrated anniversary of 1997? All right, suit yourself. But I have 800,000 sheets of virgin white paper to despoil, so I shall tell you anyway. Exactly 400 years ago in Florence a group of bored aristocrats hit upon a form of entertainment so bizarre and extravagant that it was virtually doomed to catch on in the crazy world we call showbiz. Yes, they invented opera. And four centuries later, we are still counting the cost. Or, in the case of Covent Garden, miscounting the cost.

It was all a big mistake. Our Florentine friends, being Renaissance men, revered classical Greek culture — and at that time it was believed that Greek tragedy had been sung throughout. Nonsense, as we now know. Nevertheless, the Florentines felt that what was good enough for Euripides should be good enough for them. So in 1597 or 1598 (depending on which history book you read) a man called Peri wrote a "sung play"

After 400 years, time for new tunes?

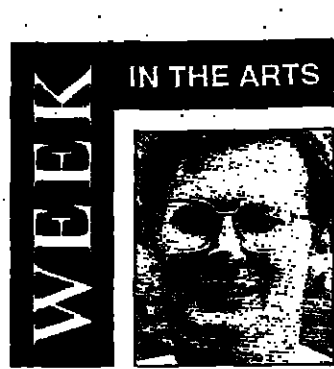
called *Dafne* — the first opera. We don't know how it sounded; the music is lost. But we do know that the heroine turned into a tree. Not only the first opera, then, but also the first daft opera plot.

Such music that has survived from early operas is very austere: the Florentines, mostly amateurs, were reacting against the polished polyphony of professionals like Palestrina and Byrd (ie, composers of genius) who, as they saw it, were obscuring the words.

Within ten years, however, a real composer, Claudio Monteverdi, gave opera its first masterpiece, *Orfeo*. Soon opera was the executive toy of choice for despots across Europe. Every prince had to have one. A giant leap for mankind? Well, several ducal courts went broke, and little boys began to be castrated in the cause of *bel canto*. Mixed blessings, you might say.

Today, we don't have many ducal courts or castrati (shame, I hear, the traditionalists cry), but otherwise the grand operatic tradition of Spurge and Spend is much the same. From the Mantuan court that bankrolled Monteverdi, past the lacy fripperies of Lully's spectaculars for the Sun King, and through the "whooops, I'll need another seven tubas" excesses that Wagner inflicted on poor, mad Ludwig II of Bavaria, to this week's revelations of managerial Götterdämmerung at Covent Garden — you can trace an unbroken line of carefree extravagance. The difference today is that the chief paymaster is usually the State, which can lead to democratic difficulties when most of the population doesn't like opera.

Actually, there is another big difference, but hardly anybody notices it. Indeed, although the



RICHARD MORRISON

millions of words written about this week's opera crisis have included demands for faster subsidies, brighter managers, cheaper tickets, richer patrons, tighter accountants and quicker resigna-

tions, nobody has mentioned the most obvious vacuum in modern operatic life. Where are the composers who write operas that people want to hear?

Consider this. A generation ago, opera-lovers rushed with genuine excitement to hear Britten's latest *magnum opus*. Their parents would have felt the same about Strauss. A generation earlier, the new Puccini had them queuing round the block. And a few years earlier it was jockey time, with Verdi, Wagner and a host of lesser names turning out durable hits by the month.

You get my drift. For its first 350 years opera was composer-driven. It might have been financed by kings, but they were in thrall to genius. Opera was sustained by a creative imperative. But in the past 50 years? Britten, Stravinsky and Prokofiev have produced works

worth hearing twice, but they are dead and precious little else has entered the repertoire. Opera today is not composer-driven, but institution-led. The imperative is not musical creation but job preservation.

True, this endless recycling of a tiny repertoire — no more than three dozen works regularly do the rounds — is ingeniously disguised by eye-popping interpretations. But it's museum culture for all that. And when genuinely popular operatic works do emerge, mostly from America, they never seem to reach Britain's main opera houses.

Think, for example, of John Adams's brilliant *Nixon in China* or John Corigliano's ingenious *The Ghosts of Versailles*. It's as if our opera chiefs are scared of being labelled as vulgarians. If Verdi popped up on

the doorstep of Covent Garden tomorrow with the freshly scrawled score of *Rigoletto* under his arm, he would be told to try his luck with Cameron Mackintosh.

Of course the overheads of grand opera are so enormous that companies can't afford to gamble often on pieces unknown to the public. And the rise of film, television, pop music and the musical has given composers with melodic flair far more lucrative markets for their talents.

But it is also possible that opera has reached the end of its natural life as an art form. The world has changed a bit in 400 years, but opera is still trapped in the bizarre conventions inaugurated by Peri when he turned *Dafne* into a tree for the entertainment of Florentine toffs. Before Sir Richard Eyre and his opera-reform committee get down to the important business of rearranging the deckchairs in the *Crush Bar*, they should ponder that sombre thought. Are we spending millions to sustain an art form that has nothing new to say?

Today the world, tomorrow try harder

Teddington at teatime. The schools of the leafy London suburb decant and, at every traffic light, mothers in large cars wait to steer their children home through the quickly advancing gloaming. Meanwhile, any glance to the left or right finds the driver staring through lighted windows into scenes of casual domesticity: the au pair preparing tea for her young charges, for example, or the lone male waiting for a kettle to boil and the microwave to ping.

And nearby, within a B&Q-styled dressing room at the complex of Thames TV, the world's bestselling recording artist of the past two years takes a rehearsal break. She turns off the television set and asks for help in killing the relentless, larynx-threatening central heating.

"I'm totally content at this point in my life," says Celine Dion, increasingly confident in her second language. Then, momentarily thrown by the need for the correct idiomatic phrase, she falters. Happy in my own skin, I suggest? "Oui, exactement!" comes the reply. "Je me sens très bien dans ma peau."

As well she might. The former child star from Montreal, who began recording in her native French at the age of

MUSIC: Alan Jackson brings us up to speed with the latest doings of flat-out superstar Celine Dion

12, is currently on top of the showbusiness world, "although it is important to stress that I am completely grounded," she interjects. "My feet are not at all in the air."

Her fourth album, 1995's *Falling into You*, has sold an astonishing 25 million copies, a tenth of them in the UK alone. But although its successor, *Let's Talk About Love*, is at or near the top of charts around the world, Dion is not inclined to sit back and enjoy the achievement.

Nothing is being left to chance. Four days into the first leg of her latest British tour itinerary, the 29-year-old star has already performed her new single, *The Reason*, on a clutch of the week's most-watched television shows — *The National Lottery*, *The Smash Hits Awards* and *Talking Telephone Numbers* — and has topped the bill at this year's Royal Variety Show, to

be broadcast by ITV this Sunday from 8.30pm. Now she is about to record not one but two guest slots for another ratings-magnet, *Des O'Connor Tonight*. That the unwritten rules of light entertainment demand a different dress for each show is evidenced by the slip of silver lamé and the slither of claret-coloured velvet currently awaiting occupation at the other end of the room.

"I'm just happy that people are offering me the best of themselves"

This current eagerness to share a little of her stardust must amuse her, I suggest. After all, when we

first met in 1991, with Dion struggling to deploy her newly learnt second language in promotion of her very first English LP, few within the British media were inclined to give her the time of day; indeed, it is whispered elsewhere that, as recently as 1994, O'Connor's bookers rejected her as a guest. But Dion is a

good-natured pragmatist. "It's the same as with writers," she says. "On the way up, you struggle to get strong material. Once you've had an album sell 25 million though, it's like, 'Hey, I think I'll give her my new song!'"

"But I'm not cynical. I'm just happy that people are offering me the best of themselves."

Ideally, she and her husband-manager Rene Angeli had hoped to be preparing for parenthood this year, not the release of another album. But biology shows no respect for star status and, when Dion did not fall pregnant on cue, the couple let it be known they might be starting the recording process again. "We thought we'd just sit back and see what came in and, well..." (she mutters being buried under an avalanche).

Her duetting partners on *Let's Talk About Love* are Barbara Streisand and Luciano Pavarotti. The Bee Gees and Bryan Adams are among those who have contributed tracks. Even Carole King — charmed by Dion's recent recording of her composition *You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman* — ventured out of semi-retirement to pen and sing backing vocals on *The Reason*. As if that were not enough, the song also represents Sir George Martin's swansong in the recording studio.

Many critics have found the resulting musical mix too rich for their tastes, but there can be no faulting an awesome voice and increasingly mature delivery. Back in 1991, her first English-language producer, Christopher Neil, compared her talent to Streisand's, and predicted that Dion would enjoy a career of similar longevity. Now, with the two voices blending seamlessly on the current hit *Tell Him*, it is as if even the great diva herself is acknowledging a shared lineage.

"I do kind of feel I have been handed the baton," Dion says. "That puts the pressure firmly in my camp, and right now I'm running hard. I don't want to run forever, though. I'm looking one day to hand it on again. These are great times for me, but I am not a selfish person. I believe in giving something back to show gratitude for my success."

She says she would like to stop releasing records while still at the top, perform only occasionally, and diversify. She is currently preparing to record a new French-language LP, and will undertake a world tour next year. After it, her best-case scenario would involve having a first child, then returning to the English-speaking market not as a singer, but an actress — one of two movie options currently under consideration is a biopic of Edith Piaf. "But if I accept one or the other, it will



Canada's premier chanteuse proves, should anyone doubt it, that her career has legs

Joy of a triple whammy

If you are on the party circuit this Christmas you will at one point wish to know something about those people huddled in a corner bearing anxious, no, downright worried looks. They have been overheard discussing morale and they are agreed that it has never been lower.

Puzzle no longer: they are from the BBC drama department, where morale has never been lower for as long as anyone can remember. This is the nature of drama departments: they deal so much in tragedy and high farce that their own daily lives have become imbued with its main

RADIO

elements of confusion and uncertainty.

When I came upon the title of this week's *Monday Play* I thought at first that it had been commissioned as a piece of advice to the downtrodden of BBC drama. In fact, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (Radio 4) was simply the best single play to come on the air in a long time.

The Trick is not an original work, indeed it came to radio third-hand. But therein lay some of its merit. It began as a novel by Janice Galloway and then became a stage play, adapted by Michael Boyd, who has reworked it for radio.

The story is of Joy, a teacher and all-round fairly ordinary person, whose life disintegrates after her partner dies in a swimming accident. Joy's slow slide into mental collapse is told using a technique that requires guts in any medium, for she is played by three people in order to convey the overlapping complexity of what is happening.

On stage there is the advantage that the three can be delineated physically. On radio everything is dependent on the voices and the techniques available to sound engineers. It came off brilliantly. As Joy, Siobhan Redmond, Jennifer Black and Eddi Reader swooped and roared and whispered, overlapping and merging seamlessly. Tremendous effort and application was here disguised as effortless acting.

PETER BARNARD

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Given its ambiguous lyrics and patchy performances, the fundraising single *Perfect Day* could have been worse

**CATLIN
MORAN**

But then, the entirety of the *Perfect Day* single — still at No 1 — is pretty astounding. The fact that it's for charity seems to have dulled critical incisors, and made us view it through the crazy psychedelic glasses of cockle-warmed fools. Charity does do odd things to our rationale: as Ben

Aside from the performances — which aren't all bad: Bono, Evan Dando and Emmy-Lou Harris got the right vibe — there's the concept of the whole thing to wrestle with. Consider for a moment: stars from all over the world sing a paean to smack, to help crack-babies in Liverpool. This is the sort of thing the Zeus of satire, Chris Morris, used to do on *The Day Today* and *Brass Eye* — but

Of course, heroin songs always have that handy ambiguity in them — smack is idealised as a nurturing woman/mother figure, as in *The La's There She Goes*, or as a return to the womb in *Hear-Shaped Box* by Nirvana. This imagery has allowed heroin to be romanticised in popular music like no other illegal activity. You can't imagine the Stranglers writing another *Golden Brown* — which I thought until recently was about toast — about tax evasion; or the Velvet Underground theming an album around cook-frying.

The oddest thing, though, is that—even if you are armed with a “mute” button for Heather Small’s appearances—*Perfect Day* makes a wonderful advert. If the BBC screened it, and immediately afterwards announced they were bumping the licence fee up to £200, most people would shrug, and say: “Well, you got Shane McGowan out of the pub for ten minutes. Respect. Do you take Switch? Would a tip be appropriate?” The mistake was thinking that adverts can stand up as artistic works. Jack Dee’s dancing penguins are wonderful for 30 seconds, but would make an appalling feature-length movie; and *Oxo Family—The Sit-Com*, as all who have watched 24 Children are aware, makes for a voracious half-hour.

Still, it is for charity. Let’s just hope that Heather Small doesn’t push it, and try to invade Poland for Christmas.



You Reed's smudgy voice made the original *Perfect Day* a thing of beauty — then along came an all-star cast to spoil it. No, Small isn't beautiful

But you won't hear that from the 8,000 young 'uns crushed into the Point. This was the first pig of a three-night stint — finishing tonight — sandwiched between their long, hard slog across the Continent and their impending UK dates (ending with three concerts at Wembley Arena later this month). For these green-gilled 'concertgoers, merely being there was a case for celebration. The Gallagher brothers only had to turn up and Dublin was theirs.

Be Here Now was an ill-judged opening gambit. A rousing *Stand by Me* was followed by somewhat perfunctory renditions of *Supersonic* and *Some Might Say*, which deserve so much better. *Don't Look Back in Anger*, though, is a stadium anthem waiting to happen and didn't disappoint. But *Wonderwall*, after only two years already a timeless standard, was anonymous, buried by Noel's electric guitar, which also outstayed its welcome on the self-consciously epic *Iris Getting Better (Man!)* and the finale *Champagne Supernova*.

NICK KELLY

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The instrumental shadings are so subtle that several hearings are required before ears attuned to the high definition of modern pop can adjust to such lightly dappled tones. But after a while the reggae bass lines, accordion and violin drones, and discreet splashes of flute, penny whistle and piano gradually reveal their charms.

Clearly a labour of love for all taking part. It is rare to find an album involving such a high-profile artist that is so

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NEW ALBUMS

thoroughly and plausibly steeped in ethnic folklore. While the Stones continue to build their own *Bridges to Babylon*, here is a fascinating detour from the beaten track.

YES
Open Your Eyes
(Eagle Records EAGCD013)

£18.49) **TORCHBEARERS** for a curiously discredited strand of 1970s progressive rock. Yes have long suffered from an inability to keep abreast of developments, so much so that

Open Your Eyes combines elements of the "classic" Yes sound — lots of complex vocal harmonies led by Jon Anderson's grating castrato — with

TOP TEN

1	(2)	Spiceworld
2	(1)	Let's Talk About Love
3	(3)	Urban Hymns

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- | | | | |
|----|------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | (2) | Spiceworld | Spice Girls (Virgin) |
| 2 | (1) | Let's Talk About Love | Celine Dion (Epic) |
| 3 | (3) | Urban Hymns | Verve (Hus) |
| 4 | (12) | Best of | Wizent |
| 5 | (5) | Greatest Hits | Elaine (Epic) |
| 6 | (8) | Backstreet's Back | Backstreet Boys (Jive) |
| 7 | (24) | All Saints | All Saints (London) |
| 8 | (6) | Paint the Sky with Stars | Enya (WEA) |
| 9 | (5) | Like You Do | Lightning Seeds (Epic) |
| 10 | (9) | Left of the Middle | Natalie Imbruglia (RCA) |

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■ **Figure is America's clearest last week's position**

and Aerosmith to recast their songs in an acoustic vein are long gone. These latest instalments are both major, set-piece performances featuring new arrangements of (mostly) old songs, but also, in some cases, more ornate than the original recordings.

Adams brings in an orchestra with disastrous results on *Is It I'll Die*. But even so, you feel that most of his songs are strong enough to withstand anything up to and including an oomph-band treatment. He turns *I Think About You* into an appealing hillbilly stomp and adds touches of mandolin and low whistle to the otherwise familiar-sounding epics including *Cuts Like a Knife* and *Heaven*.

The first sound on Babyface's album is an electric guitar played by Eric Clapton who stylishly waves two fingers in the face of the *Unplugged* ethos with his slick, bluesy chops on *Change the World* and *Talk To Me*. From there the album quickly turns into a "special guests" love-in with a succession of over-emotional cameos from Stevie Wonder (*Game Too Soon*; *How Come, How Long*), Shanice Wilson (*Breathe Again*) and others.

Although these collections do boast a somewhat greater sense of occasion than an ordinary live album, they confirm the impression that *Unplugged* is now more of a brand name than a sound.

DAVID SINCLAIR

[illegible]

LONDON

BARBICAN HIGHLIGHTS: Tonight's concert (8pm) offers British audiences the only opportunity this year to sample the fruits of the continuing collaboration between the outstanding Norwegian saxophonist Jan Garbarek and the gifted teenage violinist Sarah Chang. Displays her remarkable musical maturity in a festive featuring works by Mozart, Strauss and Chopin. Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-638 8821). (S)

THE CASTLE SPECTRE: M. G. "Mork" Lewis's most popular play, a heart-breaking, abridged version of the ghost story "The Castle Spectre" by James Sheridan Knowles. The Times in 1977. Ted Craig directs Phil Wadsworth. Drayton Rd, East Croydon (0181-680 4050). Previews tonight, 8pm. Opens tomorrow, 8pm. Then Tue, 8.30pm, Wed-Sat, 8pm, Sun (Dec 7 and from Jan 4), 5pm.

DAVID COPPERFIELD: Matthew Francis adapts and directs the Dickens tale for his last production as artistic director. Damien Matthews plays David Copperfield. Croydon, SE10 (0181-680 4050). Previews tonight, 7.45pm. Opens Mon, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, Sun, 2.30pm. Last week's matinee on Dec 11, various times (S)

MORE GRIMM TALES: A second group of stories by the same team of Carol Ann Duffy and Tim Supple who created the excellent 1994 production. Probably just as memorably macabre. Young Vic, 88 The Cut, London SE1 (0171-638 6383). Opens tonight, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat at various times, Sun (Jan 4, 11, 18, 4pm) (S)

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: Bernard Haitink makes a

WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Matt Hargre

welcome visit to the South Bank to see the LPO in a programme of Britten's Les Illuminations and Martin's Fourth Symphony. With the soprano Janina Gavrilova. Royal Festival Hall, South Bank, SE1 (0171-904 4242). Sunday, 7.30pm (S)

ELSEWHERE

ALDEBURGH: Premier here of the American composer Francesco Zambello's staging for the Royal Opera of Britten's first music-theatre work, Paul Bunyan. Richard Hildes conducts a

cast led by Thomas Harder as Isidorus and Peter Coleman-Wright as the Narrator. The production, designed by Hildegard Bechtler with lighting by Wolfgang Globel, transfers to the Shettleston, London, on Wednesday. Stage Works, Suffolk (01728 425459). Tonight and tomorrow, 7.30pm

BIRMINGHAM: The approaching seasonal festivities are heralded with a performance by the City of Birmingham Choir and Orchestra (tonight, 7pm) of Handel's magnificent oratorio Messiah. Christopher Robinson conducts. Solists include Rebecca Evans, Robin Blake, James Oley and Jeremy Hux Williams. Repeat performance on December 9. Symphony Hall, Broad Street (0121-212 3333). (S)

A pre-Christmas treat is also on offer for dance lovers here with the opening tonight of Peter Wright's dazzling theatrical production for Birmingham Royal Ballet of The Nutcracker, set to Tchaikovsky's glorious score. Hippodrome, Hand Street (0121-622 7488). Tonight, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; several matinees. (Dec 17) (S)

BOURNEMOUTH: A splendid evening of local opera going on as featured as glamorous opera does. Lesley Garrett gives a concert performance here. She is accompanied by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in an extensive programme which includes works by Mozart, Schubert and Liszt. International Centre, Exeter Road (01202 456458). Tomorrow, 7.30pm.

LONDON GALLERIES

Barbican: James Ensor (0171-638 8821). **British Museum:** Carver (0171-494 5065). **Modernism:** The Modernism (0171-638 5144). **National Portrait:** Sir Henry Raeburn (0171-722 6201). **Royal Academy:** Victorian Fairy Painting (0171-435 7438). **Tate:** The Turner Prize 1997 Exhibition (0171-587 8000).

A Bournemouth concert for diva Lesley Garrett

THEATRE GUIDE

Jerome Kingdon's assessment of theatre showing in London

Houses full, restaurants busy. Some seats available. Seats at all prices

HERITAGE: George Cole plays a military personnel in a London retirement home, with Tim Pigott-Smith and Gwen Taylor as his son and daughter, each with a life of their own. **Mad** (0171-532 2252). Tonight, 7.30pm; tomorrow, 2.15pm and 7.30pm. In rep.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC: The cast-out RSC production from Stratford, with Anthony Sharp as Roxanne's father, the poet, in London for a limited season. **Shakespeare's** (0171-494 5065). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 4pm.

AN IDEAL HUSBAND: Return of Peter Hall's enjoyable production, brimful of discourses. **West End** (0171-494 5065). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; mat. Thu, 3pm and Sat, 4pm.

A DELICATE BALANCE: Ewan Alcorn hauntingly chilling in welcome revival of Albee's play about marriage, parenthood and neglectful children. **Shakespeare's** (0171-494 5065). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 4pm.

A GRAND NIGHT OUT: Wallace and Gromit take to the stage for Christmas, pursued to London by the Pinguin, escaped from Gromit and bent on revenge. **Shakespeare's** (0171-494 5065). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Sat, 4pm. From Dec 19, mat. almost daily.

SCISSOR HAPPY: Comedy which makes the audience can play detective. Adapted by Neil Muller, Lee Simpson and Jim Sweeney from the US long-runner *Sheep Madness*.

CHASING AMY (18): Comic-book artist finds himself in love with a lesbian. Appearing new film from Kevin Smith, with Ben Affleck and Joey Lauren Adams. **ABC** (0171-369 1721). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed, 3pm. (S)

THE MYTH OF FINGERPRINTS (15): Drama about a dysfunctional family, with good science and a good cast, but a tedious centre. **Star Line** (0171-369 1721). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed, 3pm. (S)

ONE NIGHT STAND (18): Absorbing study in fidelity and its aftermath. **Star Line** (0171-369 1721). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed, 3pm. (S)

UNDER THE SKIN (18): Powerful, edgy British indie horror. **Star Line** (0171-369 1721). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed, 3pm. (S)

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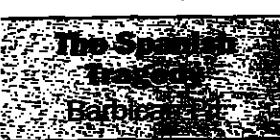
THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF AMERICA (abridged): **Star Line** (0171-369 1721). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed, 3pm. (S)

More gore than Hamlet

There is an awful lot of entertainment to be found in the unexplored reaches of Elizabethan drama. A lot of awful writing too, often enough, though not in Thomas Kyd's famous revenge tragedy, considered by some to be the first English play of this type. If the inspiration of the score or so of playwrights whose works have survived had all been much of a muchness, we might rate the better ones higher than we do. But of course there's Shakespeare, and his characters are so complex and blessed with such gifts of the gab, that the characters dreamt up by his lesser contemporaries seem at best three-quarters baked.

So here are the tragic events in the last days of old Hieronimo, who despairs of justice from his sovereign, sees no sign of it coming from heaven above, and therefore takes it upon himself to avenge the murder of his son. After doubling and delaying — hence, perhaps, his influence upon the character of Hamlet — he devises a grim little play in which his chief enemies are cunningly slain, and he himself takes out his own tongue. Two others die in the slaughter, and his son's decaying body is also revealed, hanging from the tree where he was murdered. Even the corpse-strewn close of *Hamlet* is less awash with blood.

Michael Boyd's direction



The Spanish

leaves the main area of the stage bare, but beyond a heavy crimson curtain — which comes hurtling down like a guillotine 30 feet wide — the cast are sometimes seen sitting as if in a group portrait, or *Torero* Piper's design hangs swinging planks there to represent the hated trees. The movements of the actors echo this alternation between the frozen and the giddy. In one scene the injured Bel-Imperia tries to twist away from her wicked brother; onlookers move in a shadowy circle around them; and in the outer reaches of the maelstrom are we, the audience.

The play's start is awkward, never explaining why the ghost of Don Andrea (Patrice Naiambana), once pledged to Bel-Imperia, now killed in war, should seek revenge. Revenge is personified as a cowardly monk, eventually identified as Hieronimo, though this makes only a partial sense. Peter Wright, assembling a younger, sprightlier Vaughan Williams, can make Hieronimo look distressed, but there are only about a dozen lines where the words open up the agony of his loss. The result, with rhetoric now out of fashion, is a perfor-



Eyes ablaze: Siobhan Redmond as Bel-Imperia with Patrice Naiambana (Don Andrea)

mance where an able actor endeavours to create flesh from blood and straw.

Robert Glenister's murder-

smile that bares just his upper incisors turns him into a killer weasel. But the best performance comes from Siobhan Redmond's Bel-Imperia, court-

elegantly erotic, playfully ironic: disaster turns her into a broken doll, but her eyes still blaze. She would make a sensational Duchess of Malfi.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Ease into cabaret

COMEDY

Bob Downe

THE timing is less than ideal. Just when Steve Coogan is making us cringe at the TV misadventures of Alan Partridge on Monday nights, the cut-price antics of the Australian crooner, at first sight, bound to appear one-dimensional. There are only so many times you can get away with mangling *Fly Me To The Moon* or *Those Lazy-Hazy-Crazy Days of Summer*.

Yet anyone who has sat through a sub-standard cabaret act — this reviewer's mind goes back to the grim spectacle of former pop star, Desi Friedman dying a slow death at the Café Royal — will appreciate the nuances of Downe's routines. There is, in the end, more to his show than an egregious sense of pitch. The jarring, borbory, the obsessive name-dropping, the barely restrained glint of panic behind the fixed smile: Downe captures it all.

The obvious point of comparison is

with his illustrious compatriot, Dame Edna. Downe's creator, Mark Trevorrow, does not quite possess her capacity for gleeful malice, but his blend of ingratiating patter and unfettered ego is just as compelling.

For his Christmas show he could not have chosen a more suitable venue than the Talk of London, the ageing lounge-lizard's haunt off Drury Lane. Why spend money on an expensively tasteless Seventies set when you can prance and skip beneath the room's enormous plastic chandelier? Downe's safari shirts and gaudy kaftans are perfectly at home here.

The quality of the humour is sometimes as erratic as his dress sense. In the first half especially, the jokes had a habit of stumbling before the punchline. But Downe's satire grew ever sharper as the evening progressed. New Zealanders stood in for Irishmen in the ethnic stakes; he even made a throwaway impersonation of Cleo Laine that was scarily accurate.

A later exposure of kitsch would have taken over behind well-to-do heads of easy-listening classes. Downe uses the backing tapes sparingly enough, his voice veering in mid-sentence from Antipodean Desi O'Connor to a strangled Elvis Presley. You would have had to be a sad specimen indeed to want to buy the *Greatest Hits* album on sale in the foyer, but Downe in the flesh, hairpiece and all, is difficult to resist.

CLIVE DAVIS

Passion well spent

RECITAL

San Bostridge

FOR any singer, Schubert's *Winterreise* is a lifetime's work. It is, in the cycle's own words, a journey from which there can be no return. In the six years of his career so far, the young tenor Ian Bostridge has gone further along the desolate road than most. He has sung, written, sung again, discussed, written some more, and even made a film of the song cycle.

Wednesday's performance had grown immeasurably even from his last: it was almost as if Bostridge, like Schubert's wanderer, could have believed his hair to have turned grey in the interim. Indeed, there were times when Bostridge as singer-self and Bostridge as poetic persona seemed well-nigh inseparable. He would haunt the entire stage, at times pacing restlessly, at times making pauses for rest and for water. By the time he had reached *Mut* (*Courage*), the third song from the end, it was as if he had to will himself on.

HILARY FINCH

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POSTS



University of Durham

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Informal enquiries can be made to Professor Tony Cockerill, Director of DUBS on 0191 374 2200 or e-mail: Tony.Cockerill@durham.ac.uk

Further details may be obtained from the Director of Personnel, University of Durham, Old Shire Hall, Durham DH1 3EP (tel: 0191 374 7258; fax: 0191 374 7253 or e-mail: Acad.Recruit@durham.ac.uk).

Closing date for all posts: 12 January 1998. Please quote appropriate reference.

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- 5 weeks paid holiday apply.

For further details and an application form please contact: The Head Teacher, Meldreth Manor School, Fenny Lane, Meldreth, Royston, Herts. SG8 6LG. Tel: 01763 260771. CVs will not be accepted.

Closing date for applications: 22nd December 1997.

Interviews will be held early in January 1998.

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For further information and an application form, please call GUY LONGHORN on 0171 273 6194, or write to him at the Department for Education and Employment, Level 5, Caxton House, 6-12 Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA.

Completed application forms should be returned with a CV by Friday 9 January 1998.



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POSTS

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James Bibby Chair of Engineering Manufacture

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Quote Ref: B/852/T Closing Date: 9th January 1998

Further particulars and details of the application procedure may be requested from the Director of Personnel, The University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 3BX on 0151 794 2210 (24 hr answerphone) or via email: jobs@liverpool.ac.uk

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Quote Ref: B/850/T Closing Date: 22 December 1997

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Particulars of the appointment can be obtained from

The Clerk to the Governors,
Manchester High School
for Girls, Grangethorpe Road,
Manchester M14 6HS.
Telephone 0161-224 0447

The closing date for the receipt of applications is Friday January 23rd.

RESEARCH STUDENTSHIPS

TRINITY HALL, Cambridge
Nightingale Studentships
PhD Research in the Field of Mental Health

Trinity Hall invites applications for the above Studentships, which were established in memory of the late Michael Nightingale, a member of the College who died in 1991, and are funded from his bequest. They are open to all qualified graduates, of whatever university and whatever nationality, who wish to conduct doctoral research at Cambridge (or are already engaged in such research) in the field of mental health.

It would be a condition of the award of the Nightingale studentship that the successful applicant be admitted as a postgraduate research student by the Board of Graduate Studies of the University of Cambridge and be, or become, a member of Trinity Hall. Preference will be given to applicants who wish to conduct research into the operation

of the Court of Protection, but the College is prepared to consider any topic that falls within, or is appropriately related to, the field of mental health law.

The amount of the grant (including fees and maintenance and reasonable research costs) will be at full-cost level. Studentships may be held for up to three years (with effect from 1 October 1998).

Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from: The Master, Trinity Hall, Cambridge CB2 3TL. Enquiries may be made by post, by fax (01223 462116) or by e-mail (djc24@cam.ac.uk) but not by telephone. The closing date for receipt of the completed application forms is 31 March 1998. Please quote Ref: NS/TH083.

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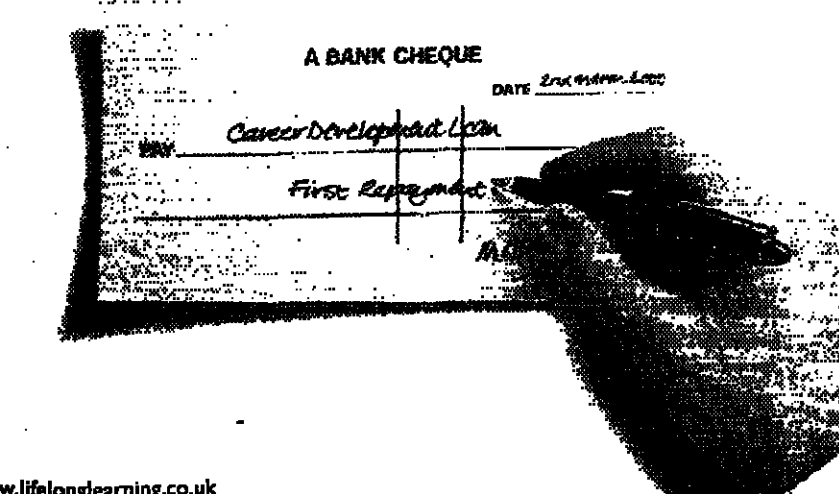
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EDUCATION

A rural life seems ideal. But for the young, Fred Redwood says, it may be anything but

The horrors for a child of a country upbringing

To bring up children in a country village is the dream of many parents. Early years spent enjoying a Laurie Lee existence, carol-singing at Christmas and helping out on the farms in summer seem far removed from the inner-city ambience of drugs and street violence. But is this merely a romantic dream?

This week's report by the Rural Development Commission suggested that for many people it is. Facilities taken for granted by town dwellers were often absent in the countryside. Education was high on the list of potential problems because, despite a 17 per cent increase in population over 20 years, almost half of the 9,000 rural parishes had no school.

An earlier investigation by The Children's Society (*Same Scenery, Different Lifestyle*) found that even where schools do exist, many children are extremely frustrated by country life. They feel isolated and bored when they cannot visit friends or travel to clubs for lack of public transport. Several described their lives as negative and short on opportunities. So serious is the problem that many head teachers of rural schools have set up initiatives to help to solve the special problems experienced by country children.

Eric Jones is the head of Bro Myrddin School, Llandell, a comprehensive in Mid Wales where the curriculum is taught in Welsh. This 820-pupil school has a huge catchment area, drawing from 30 feeder primary schools in the surrounding rural communities. Children commonly undertake 40-mile round trips between school and home every day. The travel itself causes difficulties because very few children can stay after school for extracurricular activities. Mr Jones says: "Our children know very few of their year group when they arrive here. An ideal way for them to make friends would be by joining after-school clubs, but travel ar-

rangements make that impossible. The school buses have to leave at the end of school, so there is a danger that some of our children could remain socially isolated. To counter this, we decided to break the ice for these youngsters. Before they even start at the school, we run a residential course for the 150 pupils who transfer to us each year.

"The bridging course is mainly a bonding experience, with recreational and academic pursuits. It is staffed by sixth-formers and staff from the primary and the secondary schools, so that socialising problems can be nipped in the bud."

A similar situation exists at Pothair School, St Austell, Cornwall. There, a child from one of the more remote farms may meet nobody else of a similar age outside school hours from one week to the next. The school encourages these pupils to socialise during "twilight time" — a curriculum enhancement period between 3.15pm and 3.45pm every day. Mike Stevenson, the head teacher, says: "The aim is to encourage the children to socialise and it has been very successful. We first conducted a survey to find out exactly what children wanted to take part in. There was an enthusiasm for a wide range of different clubs, ranging from girls' rugby and roller-blading to computer studies. Now we seldom encounter the kind of timid child who is overawed by the size of the comprehensive, although we are still alert to the problem. 'School phobia' is dealt with as a subject of special provision."

In Newbury, Berkshire, the problems faced by country children have resulted in an "outreach" counselling service being started. The "Time to Talk" workers operate in the rural schools, listening to the problems of children living in the beautiful downland villages between Newbury and Oxford. It is hardly an area one would associate with adolescent angst

They live in a pretty village, so it's assumed they'll cope



A childhood in the midst of nature: the reality is not always so delightful

and social misery, yet Theresa Bell, the outreach leader, is kept busy. She has identified some common problems among the village children. "In a close-knit community each child is very visible and vulnerable," she says. "So if one child falls out with the local kids there is no opportunity to move into a new friendship group, as would happen in a town. Being the odd one out then makes bullying a real possibility."

"The school bus journey is also an issue. Boredom can lead to horseplay, which can lead to bullying. These journeys are a hotbed of problems."

"Incoming children to a rural area may also find problems. Strangers are not always welcomed by country people and

setting into a small community may not be easy. Curiously, though, the biggest frustration experienced by country children is their inability to get others to take their problems seriously. Everyone assumes they have an idyllic existence and people forget that they face the same adolescent problems as everyone else."

"Their parents may split up; they have problems at school and they have relationship difficulties just like city children. But because they live in a pretty village everyone assumes they can cope."

"In fact, it may be doubly difficult for them because their friends, who can provide support, probably live a long way away and they may be unable to meet up and talk."

How a tough line is putting the clock back on race

New approaches to multicultural difficulties will not work, writes John Eggleston

This year's conference of the National Anti-Racist Movement in Education attracted about 20 delegates. At its peak, before it changed its name from the National Association for Multicultural Education, its annual gathering regularly attracted between 200 and 300 of the most committed educators. They were concerned to minimise the differences in the achievements between black children and white, seeing it as one of the greatest social inequalities, and wanting to do something to alleviate it.

Ten years on, some of the differences are being overcome. The impressive improvements in the achievements of British Indian children are well-documented. But Bangladeshi children, as a group, still do very poorly and there is much concern about the low achievement of many Caribbean British children, notably boys. Yet the sensitive, culturally aware approach that was developed and effectively implemented in some education authorities in the early 1980s is widely discredited.

Instead, we have repeated exhortations of zero tolerance of failure, and views such as "They're here, so they should be treated all alike" being expressed by governments past and present. And the new Government's White Paper on *Excellence in Education* devoted only one page to all issues of ethnicity and schooling.

Why this marginalisation of almost 10 per cent of the school population? It isn't because sensitive approaches do not work: the Department for Education and Employment is funding research based at the Open University which is studying schools where such approaches are working well for all children. And in roughly the same period, a parallel problem, the lower achievement of girls in science and technology, has been mostly solved, evidently the result of "girl-friendly" approaches.

Alas, there is nothing friendly about the anti-racist ideology that now claims to be the only viable way to overcome ethnic underachievement. It is deliberately hard-edged in approach, arguing that the old gentle, gradual path of multicultural education was too slow and should be replaced by a tough, challenging strategy.

The change of emphasis was taken up by a small but vocal group of radical

practitioners. Despite the good intentions of most of its advocates, it was almost predictable that a few excesses of the new zeal would be widely reported and given a "hokey left" tag.

Much more serious was the effect on teachers. The vast majority are resistant to the politicisation of their teaching, especially when many were pilloried as being either manifestly or latently racist.

The net result was often that less, rather than more, anti-racism took place, as teachers distanced themselves from what they saw as unjust criticism.

This distancing was all the more worrying because it occurred at precisely the same time as public concern about education and achievement reached new peaks.

What can be done? The priority must be to diminish the confrontations set up by anti-racism — the conflict between "experts" and teachers, the conflict between teachers and teachers, and above all, the conflict in the classroom, where, in some inner-city schools, students now challenge rather than co-operate with teachers. We must reinvent racially friendly and teacher-and-pupil friendly approaches.

Such approaches would recognise that Britain has truly become a multicultural society and that pedagogy and the interpretation of curriculum must take this into account. But it must also be recognised that high achievement is the common goal of children and parents from all ethnic backgrounds — provided that they are able to believe that they have the opportunity and support to reach that objective.

In the United States, this approach has been dominant for almost half a century and, despite many vicissitudes, its achievements throughout the nation are impressive. And there the commonly used slogan is multicultural education for a multicultural society.

Now that our Government is rediscovering concepts such as equality, inclusiveness and opportunity in education, we should also rediscover the true meaning of a multicultural education and use it to achieve the reconceptualisation that has eluded us for so long.

John Eggleston is Professor of Education at Warwick University.

Safety lessons children will learn for life

How can the young cope with danger? A two-week course gives answers, says Jenny Knight

"Sorry, you've died in the fire," Ralf Nicholson, of the London Fire Brigade, told the ten-year-olds who had just dashed back into a "burning house" to rescue a baby. Mr Nicholson and other experts have been giving lessons in danger to more than 900 Year Six children from Lewisham primary schools at the Bridge Leisure Centre in South London.

The two-week course uses 11 stage sets representing different hazards, from a railway line to a building site, to let the children show how they would cope with an emergency. Even the most streetwise pupils allowed themselves to be abducted by a stranger, tackled a chip-pan fire the wrong way, ran into burning buildings and failed to spot all the potential dangers in a kitchen.

PC Roy Wood, the co-ordinator, said: "The aim is to reinforce safety messages and to help the children learn from the experience of maybe choosing the wrong option. They get a lot of information, from the importance of wearing bright clothes at night to how to deal with accidents."

Claire Adams, 21, a probationary policewoman, played the role of the smooth-talking "stranger" when 23 children from St Augustine's RC School in Bellingham arrived for their afternoon at the centre. She waylaid the children in pairs as they went up a stairway. By claiming to be on the staff of the leisure centre, she persuaded most of the children to tell her their names and addresses and whether they walk to school on their own.

Then she asked one of the children to go into a room for a fitness test. As she led the child off, Geoff Best, a uniformed constable, came to the rescue, explaining to the mortified youngsters that strangers do not always look sinister.

PC Best said: "We remind them to stay out of reach of a stranger, but if they are approached to get ready to run and to say: 'I'm sorry, I've been told not to speak to strangers.' When they arrive for the session they are told not to talk to anyone not wearing a uniform or a badge, but de-



Coping with emergencies such as fire should be part of schooling

spite that most of them will be drawn into a conversation. These acting sessions made me realise how easy it is to talk children into going with a stranger. We show them that strangers who might hurt them will initially seem unthreatening and plausible."

Ralf Nicholson, a firefighter, uncovered a similar tendency for the children to exercise poor judgment when leaving a burning building. His sudden shout of "There's a baby left inside" prompted most children to mount an heroic rescue, instead of using the phone in the road to dial 999.

Railtrack found that most children are well informed about the dangers of trespassing on railway lines. Even so, a sizeable minority opted to try to pull a classmate off a railway line rather than run for help.

Matthew Ringham, a teacher at St Augustine's, said: "I'm not so surprised that most of them spoke to a stranger because they are a trusting bunch, but I didn't expect so many of them to try to pull someone off a railway line."

Jack Griffith and Francine Lemard, both ten, fell into conversation with the stranger on the stairs, but redeemed them-

selves by giving PC Best an accurate description of the "kidnapper". Jack said: "It was a bit unfair because I thought she was another of the people working here. We would have been more suspicious if she had spoken to us in the street."

His classmates, Sean Winter and Stacey Barcoe, passed the "talk to a stranger" test with flying colours by refusing to talk to one until reassured by the police that I was a reporter. Both declined to pull a victim from the railway and did not run back into the building for the baby — but still managed to "die" in the fire.

Sean said: "We were told to feel the doorknob to see whether it was hot before opening a door on to the fire. Stacey felt it, but only for a second. Then we opened the door. If the fire had been right outside the room, we should have kept the door closed because it will hold a fire back for about 15 minutes and the fire brigade usually arrives quickly."

All the children, on the Junior Citizens course, sponsored by Lewisham council, practised phoning emergency services to give them experience of the questions they are likely to be asked.

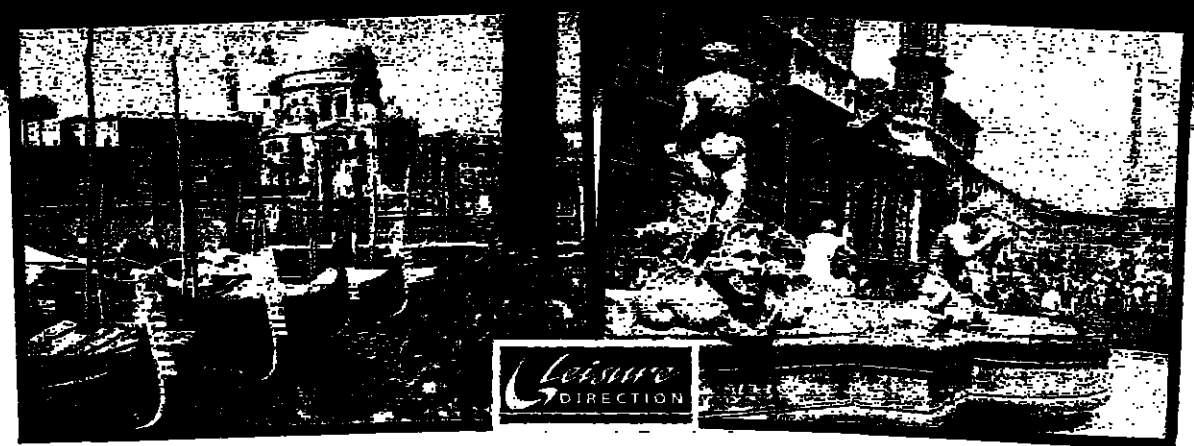
Janet Fox, an accident prevention specialist for Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark Health Authority, stocked a kitchen with an astounding array of hazards, including bleach in lemonade bottles, an aerosol spray on the oven and a dangerous iron. Most children spotted several hazards but few knew the right way to tackle a chip-pan fire — most opting to throw water on it, which spreads the flames. Others "electrocuted" themselves, when asked how they would free a piece of toast jammed in the toaster, by reaching for a knife to plunge into the toaster before switching off the electricity.

The annual Junior Citizens courses started in Greenwich ten years ago and spread to other London boroughs and into the Home Counties. Until last year, most were sponsored by BT, but now the survival of the schemes depends on individual sponsorship.

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THE TIMES

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View of Santa Maria della Salute in Venice, left, and above the Piazza Navona, Rome

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CHANGING TIMES

'Aim high and aim right. Be ambitious. And don't be afraid to look dead expensive'

Maggie Brown talks to a woman in the BBC's male-dominated upper stratum who is destined for high office at the corporation

Jana Bennett is small and resilient with an American twang to her voice. She bustles into her office — which is strewn with bowls of fresh fruit — late, in a workaday trouser suit, looking anything but a powerbroker.

Those who worked alongside her as she has risen from lowly Sheffield-based BBC news trainee to award-winning department head say that she is a bit scatty and untidy — but driven.

In conversation, she can ramble idiosyncratically before coming (eventually) to the point. After hours in her company, over dinner, in her office, the first impression holds true: she is not a typical corporate player. In fact, there is nobody quite like her at the top of the BBC. And that is her charm and her strength. She is a breath of fresh air.

This autumn she emerged in a crucial post, just one small rung below the top of the BBC programme-making empire.

In corporate speak, Bennett, 41, has replaced Alan Yentob as director of production. She is openly being groomed to become the next chief executive of BBC Production, when her boss, the stalwart Ron Neil, decides to retire. Her task is to lead and inspire 4,000 producers and staff who are organised into 18 different departments (soon to be reduced in number) as they supply £600 million of programmes to the BBC channels — everything from *EastEnders* to *Webbies* in the multimedia era. It's a bit of a super-saleswoman job, "I am," she says, "in sync with the channel controllers."

It would be hopeless if she were not. The role is newish, but the pressures are constant. It requires a strong, hustling personality, someone with the confidence to leap on trends to keep the BBC's channel controllers asking for more.

As for her management style? "Direct verbal coupling," she replies deadpan. "Talking to people is a very good idea." Why Bennett? Well, 12 million viewers are regularly charmed by one of her biggest hits, *Animal Hospital*. The quaint mixture of poorly hamstrung, tearful pet-owners having to put down Rover, and the grizzled Rolf Harris provides perfect family entertainment.

The BBC, despite Birtist-imposed management gobbledegook, respects and promotes executives, even oddballs, when their departments have the effrontery to put together such mixtures.

Bennett moved into the fast track of BBC Television three years ago when she became head of its Science Department. This group also embraced business features, which have increasingly focused on people rather than statistics. It began

with Sir John Harvey-Jones's *Trouble-shooter* and progressed to the current *Back to the Floor*. She was lucky. Science output doubled under her, assisted by a general climate within BBC Television wishing to make amends for underplaying science coverage.

But Bennett expanded her department's output from the traditional strands of *Horizon* and *Antenna*, which she had previously edited, and *Tomorrow's World*, by going pop. In *Out of This World*, the BBC Science Department unashamedly leapt onto the paranormal bandwagon. Moreover, during a heated Edinburgh Television Festival debate last year, she launched such a fluent defence of the genre that the audience broke into applause.

In the great Birtist shake-up of 1996, when broadcasting, commissioning and scheduling channels were divided from programme-making, she was invited to apply to become Controller of BBC2. She didn't get it. Mark Thompson, the current BBC Controller, did. But the resulting

backlash which produced an upper BBC stratum dominated by men made her claims difficult to overlook.

Her performance at Edinburgh was revealing. There is, as one executive noted, something fearless about Bennett. She says her strengths include the ability to focus, to switch off and to manage on a small amount of sleep. She is a "fair-weather" cyclist and loves mountaineering.

But can she survive on the heady peak, in the notoriously male-dominated upper reaches of BBC corporate life, which spat out Liz Forgan and cowed other promising women into shadowy figures?

Corporate board meetings are, she observes, hard. "Is there a style... which is male? Yes there is." But then she described an exchange at the board of management, the BBC's top policy forum, on which she sits. The members had been discussing the pattern of Friday nights, when young men are thought to order a Chinese takeaway, settle down with a bottle and watch a series of comedies, on — they hope — BBC. "I said, 'so do I'. Then the other women around the table said that they did it, too."

Bennett, in true Austen heroine fashion, is the middle of five daughters, born to the dean of admissions to New England College, New Hampshire. She had the liberal, literary upbringing that came with the territory. When she was 13 her father decided to tour Europe on half-pay for a year, taking his children out of school. He returned to America to convince the college that he should open an



Jana Bennett: once a lowly BBC trainee, now being groomed to become the next chief executive of BBC Production

English branch in Arundel, West Sussex.

At the age of 14, Bennett and three of her sisters were transported to Bognor Regis, to a house next to the Butlin's holiday camp: she completed her schooling at Bognor Comprehensive, went on to take PPE at St Anne's College, Oxford, and an MSc at the London School of Economics.

"It was a culture shock," she recalls. "I'd lived in a small American village. I hated it for the first two years." She has preserved her accent — a sign of not being fully assimilated. Her father said: "I'll support you in whatever educational opportunities you have, on condition that you elope. Don't expect me to pay for the wedding."

With a guffaw, she describes how she got married in a quickie ceremony in Las Vegas two years ago to her partner, Richard Clemenow, head of BBC News and author of the infamous memo temporarily demoting programme editors to assistants, which led to the now famous presenters' revolt and an intervention by Sir Christopher Bland, the Chairman.

She says "the wedding was totally on the spur of the moment," but was suggested by their daughter, Alexandra, now six (there is also a son, Skomer, three). The value of having a large family remains. Her youngest sister, her cameraman husband and two children, live next door in East Acton, minutes from Television Centre. They have a communal

garden and the children play together. "We've got the bulk without the effort," she says.

So, what does she bring to this most challenging of jobs? She rattles out her dictums. "Aim high, aim right. Be ambitious, and don't be afraid to look dead expensive or to make fantastically chirpy programmes."

Before moving from the Science Department she took her own advice, commissioning the most expensive documentary (a £9 million co-production) ever made by the BBC. Called *Walking With Dinosaurs*, it is using *Jurassic Park*'s digital animators to reproduce their life.

She also wants "to facilitate a more creative climate," and touched upon the devastating speech delivered by Tony Garnett, *This Life*'s drama producer, last month, pleading for respect and improved conditions for writers and creative talent. "We wouldn't ignore what he has to say," she promises.

In developments now being plotted within BBC Production, executive producers are to be given a freer access to development money, to build up their portfolio. She comments: "They should not feel hemmed in."

They are also going to be encouraged to talk directly to the various channel controllers, who commission pro-

grammes, to discuss their ideas. She is also planning to have fewer departments working across wider fields of expertise, so that hybrids are created. She insists she is not trying to "super-manage" or second-guess perfectly well-run departments.

Only last month BBC Production opportunistically merged TV and Radio sports production, supplying Radio 5 Live and TV sporting events.

Her biggest challenge is twofold. She has to flesh out the unequal relationship between the two great wings of the BBC — broadcasting, which holds the cheque-books, and her programme-makers. The great split in effect dissolved obligations. But these are being reformulated. The new phrase, which trips handily from her tongue, is that everyone is "part of the BBC family".

BBC Production has won an understanding from broadcasting that 60 per cent of commissions by value will go to them, infuriating independent producers. The Controllers of BBC1 and BBC2 will sit on boards which appoint key executives within BBC Production to ensure that they are then committed to taking their programmes.

But the final challenge is whether her complete lack of experience in drama and entertainment, the big spenders and audience-pullers, and areas needing special attention, will tell against her. Is a bit with cuddly animals preparation enough?

Making a date on the air

TV and lonely hearts ads. Virginia Matthews reports

Britain's first television ad campaign for telephone dating will be aired in the new year after a three-year battle by the 1991 lonely hearts industry to overturn a longstanding TV ban.

The 30-second ad, for Victoria Telecom's "Speak Easy" service — where the lonely are put in contact with each other for 50p a minute — marks what Chris Bradbury, the managing director, calls "the first stage in our bid to gain public acceptance for a much-maligned service".

More than 15 million chatline or telephone dating calls are made in Britain each year. While the entire sector has been repeatedly accused of peddling filth, not to mention running up huge phone bills, the telephone watchdog ICSTIS believes that the industry has cleaned up its act in recent months.

Victoria Telecom is one of the country's top five date and chatline companies with a turnover in excess of £25 million. Its ad will show "fully dressed men and women over the age of 18 enjoying getting to know each other over the phone in a non-pressured environment".

In deference to the ITC code, which forbids the exploitation of "emotional vulnerability", or anything that appears to "encourage or condone promiscuity", the voiceover will talk about the values of friendship, romance and love.

But according to the industry's critics, who include the Society of Marriage Bureaux, telephone dating is all about sex. Its director, Penrose Halson, says the relaxation of the ban on TV commercials for telephone dating is "legitimising a potentially dubious industry" and should be reversed.

Ms Halson fears that many people who resort to 0891/0895 services "end up feeling exploited and ripped off, not to mention more lonely than ever".

Glyn Picton, chairman of the Telephone Dating Services Association, counters that the fees charged by traditional introduction agencies or marriage bureaux — anything from £300 to £600 for initial introductions — are out of reach of most people, and involve weeks of "frustrating screening by third parties".

He says: "If you're a lonely gay person or unhappily married, you may not want to be given the stark choice of braving the local disco or shelling out £500 for a list of people that some marriage broker believes will be suitable."

The ITC's decision to relax its rules on the dating industry reflects what a commission spokesman calls a "fundamental switch in society's attitude to dating" which today is seen as a way of making new friends, rather than an automatic route to the altar.

While it continues to ban ads for escort agencies, the ITC takes the view that advances in telephone technology such as number screening have reduced the potential security risks of telephone dating.

The ad for Victoria Telecom poses unusual creative problems for the team behind it. Mr Bradbury says:

"Being the first ad, the watchwords will be keeping a close eye on it," he says, "and that means no naked torsos, no women in low-cut blouses or anything remotely suggestive in either the film or the voiceover."

Mr Picton concedes that sexually orientated telephone calls are a fact of life in his industry, but adds: "I think you'll find that the ads for my members' services will be about as raunchy as Mary Poppins."

■ **PERPLEXED** BBC News executives have spent the past two days discussing how to react to a massive programme strategy review on why its main news programmes are a turn-off. The problem is that ungrateful audiences do not appreciate the huge investment in specialist journalists that John Birt insisted on ten years ago, as he forced BBC coverage upmarket.

They are asking for less politics and foreign coverage, fewer lectures on macroeconomics. Michael Hutchinson's funeral at the top, not the bottom, of the *Nine O'Clock News*.

■ **ONE** of the most depressing things is that audience research says we are only a bit more authoritative than ITN, "says my glum source.



A special edition of *Nationwide*, which was presented by children in December 1980

It's nine o'clock — turn off the news

Mischief-making



largely wasted: young viewers may never get the BBC news habit. And as BBC1 becomes ever more ratings-driven, the comparative failure of news becomes ever more apparent.

■ **ONE** of the BBC's problems is that the broadcast newspapers on which John

Birt modelled its approach in 1987 have moved on, merely reporting seedy human interest stories we all read. It is said that Birt thinks there is only one true broadcast left, the *Financial Times*. Yet word reaches me that the Pink 'Un feels a need to be "touchy feely", too. Its research apparently shows that readers don't evince any great warmth towards its weekday editions, though, if it's any consolation, the austere Don Cruickshank, Director-General of Ofcom, told me how much he admired the *Lex* column for its brevity and depth. So the *FT*'s UK edition is planning to greet the new year with a big redesign, aimed at making its features more appealing. A City health and problem page by next Christmas?

■ **RADIO** 4's presenters are

getting uppity... As the huge April 1 shake-up in the schedule draws nearer, many of the most famous voices are sounding strained. Melvyn Bragg, whose beloved *Start of the Week* is being cut to half an hour and restricted to two guests, has signed up for only 13 weeks. Laurie Taylor, a broadcaster on Radio 4 for 20 years, currently on the doomed *Afternoon Shift*, says he has yet to find a regular new berth. The five cultured presenters of *Kaleidoscope*

(Paul Allen, Paul Vaughan, Paul Gambaccini, Lynne Walker, Tim Marlow) are being dispensed with when the arts strand is replaced with a snazzier, shorter 7pm slot. Will *The Guardian's* Mark Lawson stand in? Jenni Murray, the honeyed voice of *Woman's Hour*, is thought to be restless, too: just "rumours", she says. What I know is this: my phone has been red hot with Radio 4 stalwarts who believe that the complete overhaul

which started last July is not going smoothly, no matter what assurances the BBC's governors are given. And go, there are entire slots and programmes seeking both inspiration and presenters.

■ **A COMMERCIAL** for Harvester restaurants is being investigated by the Broadcasting Standards Commission after a viewer said it was "sexually suggestive". The commercial shows

a couple silently sharing a £14.99 Harvester platter. It is reminiscent of that scene in the 1962 film *Tom Jones*, when Albert Finney and Joyce Redman acted out the most erotic meal on celluloid with chicken legs and luscious fruit — but with touches of *When Harry Met Sally* thrown in for good measure. To think Harvester spare ribs and king prawns could be that exciting!

■ **ON MONDAY** Sir Michael Bishop, Chairman of Channel 4, will preside over his last board meeting which is due to fix next year's budget. Another four directors, David Floorright, Bert Hardy, Sir David Nicholas and Mary McAleese (the new President of Ireland) will also bow out. But there is still no news on who is going to fill the gaps. Everyone involved knows there should have been a shadow chairman for the past few months, since Channel 4 is bedding in a new team under its chief executive, Michael Jackson. "It really is a mess," says one director crossly, though interviews are under way. Word has it that Sir Colin Southgate, chairman of EMI, is ready and willing, and would provide the commercial experience deemed essential to balance Jackson's creative input.

Chisholm with party a

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Chisholm bows out with party at Annabel's

On Wednesday night they marked the end of an era in British broadcasting with some style in Annabel's club in London's Berkeley Square. As it was relatively short — only seven years — but there is no doubt that British broadcasting was permanently changed as a result. They were there to pay a fond farewell to Sam Chisholm, until a few weeks ago chief executive of British Sky Broadcasting, the satellite television venture.

If a terrible accident had struck Annabel's on Wednesday, a large slice of the media's top brass would have been wiped out. On Sam Chisholm's left sat Gerry Robinson, chairman of Granada and BSkyB, and on his right Michael Green, chairman of Carlton Communications and of British Digital Broadcasting, the digital terrestrial television venture which plans to launch more than a dozen new channels next year.

Around the club were littered those who had helped Chisholm to make BSkyB the most profitable broadcaster in Europe, if not the most powerful, and those he had jostled with over the years — such as Will Wyatt from the BBC, Bob Phillips, the new chairman of the Guardian Media Group, and Don Cruickshank, the strong-minded Director-General of Ofcom, the telecommunications regulator.

In a eloquent testimony to what BSkyB has done for football, and football has done for BSkyB, the directors' box at Annabel's contained not just Ken Bates, the Chelsea chairman, but also Sir John Hall, the man who transformed Newcastle United.

In his tribute, Gerry Robinson scarcely needed to say that Chisholm had taken over "one hell of a mess" when worried shareholders had arranged the shotgun marriage of Sky and British Satellite Broadcasting. Then the combined company was bleeding £14 million a week in losses. Now the profits of BSkyB, (in which News International, owner of *The Times*, has a 40 per cent stake) are running at more than £6 million a week. And Chisholm and BSkyB carved out £1 billion a year of revenue for a pay-television market in the UK that nobody had seriously tapped before.

"I don't think anyone else could have done it in quite the same way," said Robinson.

But for all the jollity — Bob Monkhouse told the jokes and Sir David Frost was the questionmaster for a *thock University*

Challenge, "The Chisholm Challenge" — there was an air of finality about the whole thing. Guests received a piece of silver with the dates 1990-97 and thanks from Sam inscribed on it.

Although Chisholm has a two-year contract with BSkyB covering up to ten days a month of consultancy, it wouldn't be surprising if little formal consultancy actually takes place.

If he were to turn up at BSkyB ten days a month, he would still be running the place when the reins have actually been handed to the new chief executives, Mark Booth and Elisabeth Murdoch, both of whom were, of course, in their places at Annabel's. Meanwhile, the former chief executive of BSkyB has been devoting himself to the cause of ensuring that Peter Mandelson has a Millennium Dome in Greenwich for the right year and, apparently, getting involved in pay-television deals in Poland.

By coincidence this week also saw the coming to fruition of another of Chisholm's

BSkyB projects — the launch of Sky Box Office, a pay-per-view movie service. It is a modest harbinger of the arrival of 200 channels of digital television next year when as many as 60 or 70 of them will be devoted to films on a pay-per-view basis.

Already, to see such films as *The Long Kiss Goodnight* and *Michael Collins* several months before they are screened on the normal subscription movie channels, viewers simply have to call a number and the system automatically "unscrambles" the film for viewing and bills them for £2.99.

The whole economics of 200-channel television will depend on the public's willingness to pay for such movies and exclusive sports events. Apart from having to persuade the audience to move from mere subscription television to pay-per-view television, the new management at BSkyB could run into a serious obstacle — in the shape of Sam Chisholm happily sipping his champagne on Wednesday evening.

What would happen if satellite dish owners turn out to be content with the 40 channels or so of television that Chisholm put together for them and turned out to be reluctant to migrate to 200 channels of digital — whatever discounts were provided?

That would indeed be a curious legacy for the 1990-97 era of British broadcasting.



Raymond Snoddy

A free bar is one agency's way of bonding staff after a merger, says Carol Midgley



HELLO BOYS.

THE ONE AND ONLY Wonderbra

When the creative guru behind Wonderbra's famous "Hello Boys" poster left TBWA Simons Palmer after the merger, the client soon followed

Life after Wonderbra

In the vast reception area of TBWA Simons Palmer's new London headquarters is a plentifully stocked, licensed bar. Not any old bar, you understand. This one is free, providing unlimited alcohol for all staff and anyone else who happens to be passing through.

The bar, modelled on Virgin's first-class lounge at Heathrow, forms the frontpiece of the advertising agency which brought us Wonderbra, Goldfish and Nike.

The idea is to evoke a new mood of optimism and help staff to bond since the recent controversial merger between Simons Palmer Clemmow Johnson and Omnicom's TBWA. But if good morale was to be found lacking, it would hardly be surprising.

Since the merger, several high-profile clients have been lost amid a welter of publicity.

Trevor Beattie, the creative guru behind the "Hello Boys" Wonderbra posters, decided that he could not work under the new arrangement. He left, and Wonderbra, whose posters filled more newspaper gossip columns than any other last year, soon followed.

Contracts for Wrigleys and the National Canine Defence League were the next to go.

Last week Nike, for which Simons Palmer had worked for seven years, transferred its UK business to its global agency Weiden & Kennedy. It was a particularly bitter blow. Simons Palmer had achieved stunning success for Nike with a host of award-winning campaigns and the acclaimed *Parklife* commercial featuring most Premier League players.

The agency coolly responded by taking out a two-page ad in *Campaign*, featuring all its Nike work with the caption: "All the best from TBWA Simons Palmer."

Paul Simons, chief executive of the agency, says: "It is true that there was a lot of anger over that because we had worked with them for seven years. When we first took on the business, Nike was a £400 million company here. Today it is a £400 million company. We took an obscure brand and made it a household name. And now they have decided to stop doing business and you think 'Well, thanks guys.'"

Nike spent about £10 million a year with Simons Palmer, but Simons is stoical, insisting that he always knew

Nike would drop them if Weiden & Kennedy opened a London operation. "This is not the worst thing we've had to cope with, believe me," he says.

"Our biggest crisis was losing British Telecom. We were only three years old and BT was spending £30 million a year with us. But a couple of weeks later we got a contract from *The Sun*."

"People can't operate in this world if they go around with a defeatist attitude. Mentally, you have to be like an athlete and learn to pick yourself up after a knock. After we lost Nike, the people here were upset momentarily but then they said, 'Oh well, to hell with it.'"

Simons said he had offered Beattie some of his personal shares to stay but he felt betrayed at not being told of the merger. Beattie had wanted to head the creative team but Simons told him it was impossible.

"Trevor is great but I had to think in terms of the whole agency and all the other creatives we have here. His leaving is another thing which just happens. Trevor's personal fame came from things like Wonderbra, which

was very high profile but in our terms, low in importance. It was only worth about £100,000, which is tiny relatively speaking."

The agency's biggest client is currently Nissan (which spends £50 million a year), and key clients such as Sony Playstation, *News of the World*, *The Sun* and Bally International. This month it will be pitching to Guinness and ITV.

By merging two very different agencies, the strategy is to become an international creative force and agency of the year in 1998. The free bar is the first stage in their bid to knit the two agencies together.

"I wanted something colourful and uplifting, to feel like a home. Someone said I should put £50,000 aside for one of those staff bonding weekends and I thought, why not just spend it on a free bar? If you want social glue, the best way to achieve it is to have people standing talking to each other. I want this agency to be warm, non-corporate and an antidote to all the others. We want to be the most successful and the most creative agency around. The more creative you are, the more the product sells."

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Why Auntie's bloomers are such bad news

Technical hitches undermine confidence in BBC news.

Michael Leapman reports

On Tuesday BBC News 24, the all-news cable station, carried live coverage of Robin Cook's moving speech at the start of the London conference on Nazi gold. About halfway through, a caption flashed across the Foreign Secretary's left breast: "Government advert".

Regular watchers of News 24 will know that this was not a sly attempt at sabotage by an in-house crypto-Tory, but just another familiar glitch in the technology. The caption had been accidentally brought forward from a later report on drink-driving, nothing to do with Mr Cook at all.

Similar mistakes happen every day. Tony Banks has been labelled "promotional video". At Prime Minister's Question Time last week, an innocent MP was identified as the BBC political correspondent Huw Edwards. And the Evening Standard reported that Jenny Bond, the court correspondent, was captioned "Scary Spice", although this sounds apocryphal.

The BBC's line is that these and related bloomers — such

as the inadvertent switching of the camera from the current story to something or someone quite irrelevant — are the result of "minor technical problems with some of the technology, nothing that we consider a major problem". Certainly it would be unfair to write off the whole enterprise just because of small irritations.

Yet the service has been in operation for a month. Babies are allowed to teethe for longer; but for a state-of-the-art television service it ought to be more than enough time to get the technology right.

It matters because repeated presentational lapses undermine the confidence of the production team. News 24 is still afflicted by the twitchiness that was apparent on day one. The presenters, win some as they are, seem permanently on edge, wondering where the next foul-up is coming from. This is one reason why News 24 lacks the energy and immediacy of the two other stations vying for the attention of news junkies subscribing to cable. Sky News and the America's CNN. (News 24 is also trans-



Technical hitch: a caption for Scary Spice is said to have appeared under BBC court correspondent Jenny Bond



mitted on BBC1 in the early hours after daytime scheduling has shut down.)

The prevailing lethargy is especially apparent at breakfast time, when most viewers want a quick, succinct summary of important stories and overnight developments. On Tuesday, switching on at 7.40am, I waited 20 minutes for a substantial news round-up. The intervening time was mainly taken up by overlong interviews and a leisurely

report/feature on the ethics of using cannabis for medical purposes. At that time of the morning we want the snappy urgency of Channel 5 News rather than an ersatz Newsnight.

The core problem, apart from the technical hitches, is that the BBC has yet to decide News 24's real purpose. When it was announced, the Director-General, John Birt, and the head of news, Tony Hall, its principal advocates,

said it was high time that viewers could get the news when they wanted it rather than when the BBC chose to schedule the bulletins.

That implies a rolling news service where you can find out what is going on whenever you tune in. It has not turned out like that. Although two or three main headlines are repeated every 15 minutes, the long interviews and analyses fatally slow the pace.

At the other end of the day, 7.30pm is when many commuters return home and may want a quick fix on the news. On News 24 they first have to sit through the daily half-hour interview slot. *Hard Talk*.

Tuesday's interviewee was the American playwright Edward Albee. It was a fascinating half-hour and Tim Sebastian, a former foreign correspondent, turns out to be a real find as an interviewer — but it did not

have the remotest connection with the news: a bad case of perverse scheduling. You would imagine that the BBC could at least score points over its rivals by the extent and depth of its foreign coverage; but even here its performance on Tuesday was desultory. The overseas stories were the Australian bush fires, the resignation of Pakistan's President and an apparent offer by President Yeltsin to reduce Russia's nuclear weaponry.

News 24's first reports on the fires were nowhere near as vivid or extensive as those on CNN or Sky, which carried a live report from the scene. The BBC did not catch up until later. On the Pakistan story, while CNN had a live voice report from Karachi, News 24's instinctive response was to wheel in a house expert to discuss the ramifications. CNN was also well ahead on Yeltsin.

I am sure it is not meant to be like this. The slogans News 24 uses to promote itself — "The Now o'clock News", "The whole picture, the whole time" — suggest a fast-moving, eye-on-the-ball service. The set is designed to reinforce that, with its busy splashes of colour and people beavering at computer screens. So is the casual dress of the presenters, at least the male ones, for whom jackets

appear to be banned. ("No grey men in grey suits," says the promotional clip for the business news.)

The jacket ban does not extend to waistcoats, a popular fashion item for the presenters Matthew Amroliwala and Krishnan Guru-Murthy, as well as the political reporter Tim Franks. Thus garbed, and with their predominantly glum demeanour, they give the impression of snooker players sitting out an opponent's century break.

But on the plus side, News 24 has a commendable amount of live coverage and a schedule flexible enough to accommodate it. On Tuesday, apart from Robin Cook at the Nazi gold conference, we saw Tessa Jowell speaking to a Commons committee, switched live to a F&A press conference about the World Cup and watched John Prescott make his Commons statement about local government finance. (Jowell and Prescott were live on Sky.)

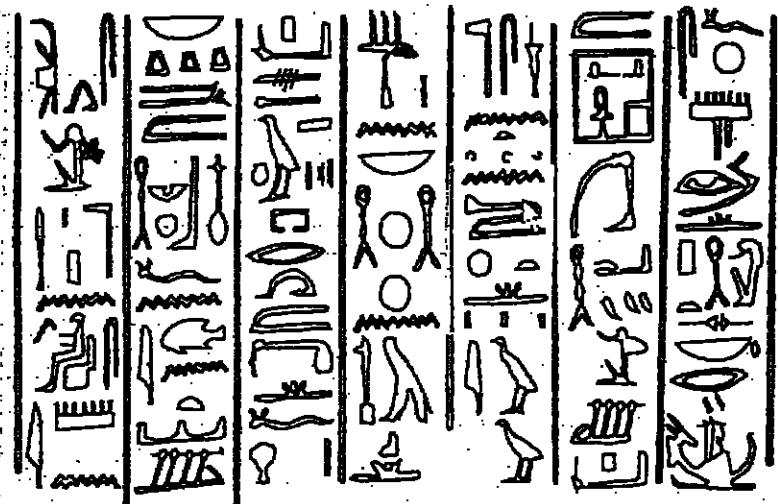
I am sure News 24 will eventually develop into a familiar and valued part of the BBC's output; but it needs work. No doubt there will be a relaunch and the bugs will be eliminated. But it would have been more sensible to wait a while and get it right from the start.

COMPASS

The British Museum

Festivals of the dead

I follow the majesty of this noble god Amun lord of the thrones of the two lands in his beautiful festival of the valley. I receive the offerings that come before him upon the altar of the lord of eternity. I inhale the incense of the laying of offerings when they [i.e. the procession of Amun] are in Hentetankh [the temple built for King Thutmose III on the West bank]. My limbs are pure when I receive the robe and see [the god] Ptah-Sokar.



chapters

A 3D tour of an Egyptian tomb, together with a translation of the accompanying graphics, will be revealed by the Compass project

The British Museum goes on the Internet

Early next year, users of the Internet wading through Websites dedicated to Dungeons and Dragons games will be able to look at Dragons of the World — oriental dragons, historic dragons, beautiful dragons from the British Museum.

The selection of representations of dragons in art and centuries-old documents relating to them will be the first sign — to the external computer user, at least — that the British Museum's ambitious new multimedia project Compass (Collections Multimedia Public Access System) is on the way.

As well as calling up a selection of colourful dragons on your computer screen, it will be possible to compare — and even merge — dragons from the East and the West.

As John Reeve, head of education at the British Museum points out, you would probably have to walk down half a mile of galleries to be able to make the same comparison.

As well as Dragons of the World, the British Museum is planning to publish an account of its own history on the Internet.

So far a prototype system with more than 350 digital objects and

Ray Snoddy sees the past come up to date

texts has been created and this is being evaluated to find the best technological approaches.

But when the Annenberg Centre opens at the British Museum in 2000, the museum hopes to have a minimum of 5,000 and possibly closer to 10,000 objects and documents in digital form through the Compass project.

They will include a three-dimensional "virtual" tour around an Egyptian tomb with translations of hieroglyphic inscriptions, gold and silver sword guards from Japan and sculptures from Benin.

When the project is complete, visitors to the museum, teachers as well as tourists, will be able to go to the Round Reading Room and consult one of the 50 terminals that will act as a basic navigational aide to the riches of the museum and which will also depict many of the fragile objects, such as documents, that cannot be displayed easily.

But perhaps in the long term the greatest significance of the project is that, through the Internet, the beauty of many of the most famous objects held by the British Museum will be brought, not only to classrooms in remote corners of the UK, but also to many millions of people around the world who may not otherwise be able to visit the museum.

The British Museum hopes the solutions that emerge from the Compass project, particularly in capturing images of three-dimensional objects, will become a national standard so that museums around the UK will have fully compatible systems.

Four specialist companies are working on the Compass project, which is just a small part of a major development scheme at the British Museum to mark its 250th anniversary in 2003. They are System Simulation, a software engineering company, Silicon Graphics, Diverse Interactive and ICL Interactive Heritage.

Some parts of the system are also likely to be published as CD-Roms, although the British Museum is looking for suitable partnerships for what will ultimately have to be a self-financing activity.

There's no business like ad business...

Something interesting has happened in the UK's top 15 agencies, Euro RSCG Wnek Gosper, has hired Michael White, the renowned film and theatre impresario, to "keep them at the cutting edge of the entertainment industry".

White, the man behind such productions as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and movies including *Monty Python* and *The Holy Grail*, has apparently been brought in to provide updates on the "latest trends in worldwide entertainment".

However, the notion of advertising as entertainment is rather spurious. Advertising is, by definition, unashamedly commercial; it sets out to shift product, change consumer opinion and inform, with purely business rather than artistic constraints.

Mark Wnek, executive creative director of the agency, says: "People are increasingly unwilling to be sold to, so the way you sell has to be more subtle and impactful. One of the most effective ways to get advertising to work is to entertain, and the advertising and entertainment fields are coming closer together."

He has a point. Entertainment is a useful tool for warming the audience and a warm reception to your message. And Euro RSCG is probably best known for rather unentertaining ads for Peugeot, Cadbury's Milk Tray, Hovis and Procter & Gamble's Clearasil, so perhaps the agency thinks a little showbiz pizzazz could well be what their output needs.

But Tony Cox, creative director of BNP DDB, the

Belinda Archer wonders if an impresario can really shift the product

agency behind such unarguably diverting campaigns as Rowan Atkinson's *Barclaycard*, believes that to view advertising in any high-falutin' way is "thoroughly wrongheaded".

"Being entertaining is very different from entertainment," he says. "It's wrong to think of ourselves as being in the entertainment business because we are there to sell things and return client investment with a profit." Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO, an agency that raids film and theatre more than most — Pizza Hut and BT's celebrity-laden campaigns — also emphasises that any showbiz personalities it uses are tailored to the hard-nosed reality of selling. Alfredo Marcantonio, vice-chairman of Abbott Mead, insists: "The stars have to be appropriate to the selling message."

In any case, copious research shows that campaigns which people like — which could be said to be entertaining — are usually effective, but if the "entertainment" is irrelevant people find the advertising irritating.

"When entertainment is artificially superimposed on the message consumers positively resent it," says Winston Fletcher, chairman of Bozell UK.

Other industry players are quick to challenge how a theatre impresario might con-

tribute to the workings of an advertising agency. "He'll be good at getting tickets for Cats, but I'm not sure what else," quips one observer, while another remarks: "White is really a theatre man, and theatre is really rather too esoteric for most people. I can't imagine how he will be able to help advertising much from the lofty heights of luvviedom."

When asked why he was hired, even White says simply: "For my contacts book," though he adds a little more seriously: "There is no longer a gulf between the entertainment business and the world of advertising. There is a lot of intermingling of creativity."

There has, however, been two-way traffic for years, particularly between directors of commercials and movie-makers, from Ridley Scott, Alan Parker and Paul Weiland through to the new wave of young commercials' talents who directed *The Full Monty* and *Shooting Fish*.

As Fletcher says: "It's codswallop to suggest that there is any increasing trend or link between the worlds of advertising and entertainment. Think of the Leonard Rossiter/Joan Collins Cinzano ad from the Eighties, think of the P G Tips chimps."

Wnek insists that hiring White isn't about "hanging out with luvvies" but is "strictly business". "We are taking on board expertise and a person who has a window on another world," he says. But one feels that the appointment — the first of its kind — has more than a little to do with a star-struck attempt to tap into the shiny world of uncompromised artistic integrity that is showbiz.

A DUST-UP between the luvvie communities of acting and advertising is unlikely to elicit anything but mirth from neutral observers. But for those involved, the ten-week Equity dispute with adland is beginning to bite hard.

It began as a little local difficulty. Advertising trade bodies got together in an attempt to curb what they view as the "excessive" amounts actors are paid for doing voiceovers in UK ads.

Forming the Joint Equity Negotiating Group (JENG), they sought to cut anything up to two thirds off the amount in an attempt to save the industry an estimated £5 million a year. Not surprisingly, Equity took a dim view of this negotiating position and pulled a clever stroke, expanding its call for members' strike action to include all appearances in commercials.

Adland failed to see this coming. It had merely hoped to put an end to the largely apocryphal tales of unknown performers such as the legendary Edd Reidel, the king of voiceovers, earning six, even seven-figure sums a year.

JENG does not argue that the current fees threaten the production or profitability of commercials, simply that the fees are exorbitant. To the outsider, JENG has a point. Unknown voiceover artists can earn anything from £200 to £3,000 for their 30 seconds, but the true worth lies in repeat fees for multimillion-pound campaigns. Agencies wise to this now try to buy out repeat fees. In turn, alert agents decline.

However, the production of commercials is threatened. Until recently, the widening of the dispute had little effect, because commercials are made months in advance. Now, agencies trying to make ads for the spring are finding

it difficult to persuade actors to accept castings, even as extras. They are having to turn to untrained "real" people, animation or rerun old ads. JENG has tried to get round Equity's intransigence by taking an ad in the *Stage* claiming the new pay rates are fair, and approaching agents unilaterally. The agents replied that all agreements would be reached through Equity.

This week cracks appeared in JENG. The Advertising Film and Videotape Producers Association represents the production companies trying to film new ads. As such, it is the first body whose members feel the financial squeeze. Ads simply aren't getting made. This also applies to the large number of overseas agencies drawn to London by the excellent Soho production community. These are includ-



ed in Equity's ban. The worried AFVPA said unilaterally that it would pay the old rates, and the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising has responded by trying to ban it from the negotiations. The AFVPA has vowed to fight on and is seeking to have the dispute heard by Acas.

Meanwhile, IPA member agencies are becoming increasingly angry with the body, believing it has mishandled the dispute. This week Equity played a trump card. It revealed that high-profile stars such as Helen Mirren, Ian McShane and Tim Pigott-Smith were declaring solidarity with less well-known colleagues and refusing to

perform in ads. In Mirren's case, this principle is costing her dear, despite having no problems with how much she is paid. She has declined to star in next year's Virgin Atlantic campaign, although older ads will still run for a while. Some commentators have estimated that she might earn £30,000 for her role. This is a ludicrously low estimate. She will be turning down at least £100,000.

It is not easy to replace such celebrities and we are likely to have to endure many odd ads, even some glaringly amateurish ones.

Few will spill many tears for agencies, though. For too long advertising has been seen as a gravy train by all those involved. Agencies, production companies, actors, directors, make-up artists and hairdressers have all grown fat on

clients' budgets. Now agencies are having their margins squeezed, they are looking to pass on the cost. It is laudable to try to put an end to that gravy train. A cynical Equity believes the industry can afford the fees, and other celebrity actors make few bones about trying to get as much money as possible for ads to finance "serious projects".

But if we are talking about unknown actors, the total saving sought will be less than 0.5 per cent of the total cost of TV advertisements. To wage war on unknowns' voice-over fees and not, for example, the outrageous price of TV airtime is like scrapping Post-it notes but staying in £40-a-square-foot offices in Mayfair.

The IPA has been very heavy-footed in this affair. Agencies have complained of a lack of advice beyond "sit tight and hire scab actors". However well-intentioned, it has lost its members' confidence.

Meanwhile, the only winners will be overseas agencies and actors, and some as yet unknown ordinary person who may soon find himself or herself the star of a multi-million-pound ad campaign.

THE AD industry emerged surprisingly unscathed from the Hale and Pace "Jobs for the Boys" documentary about making an ad. Far from stereotyping admen as a bunch of overpaid and oily suits, the staff at Bates Dorland emerged as hard-working and dedicated. Hale and Pace found their tasks — such as making a Dixiel dimpled toilet tissue ad — difficult and stressful.

Their conclusion was that advertising was a really tough business. Just so. Their sympathetic creative director, Tim Ashton, was fired in between the programme being made and it going on air this week.



Solidarity: Helen Mirren has declined to star in Virgin Atlantic's new campaign

CRICKET

Hollioake to come under scrutiny as one-day captain

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN LAHORE

ENGLAND return to competitive cricket today when their one-day side plays Pakistan A in a 50-over game at the Gaddafi Stadium, where Sri Lanka won the World Cup last year. On Sunday, they complete their preparations with another game of similar length before they go to Sharjah on Monday for the Champions Tournament.

The Pakistan senior team will meet them there, along with India and West Indies, who are in the doghouse after their appalling performances in the Test series here. Nothing much rests on the outcome in Lahore, but a couple of wins would obviously send England to Sharjah in good heart.

In the first instance, it will be instructive to see how Adam Hollioake shapes up as he leads England for the first time. There is also the chance to see how a side of players considered one-day specialists — or at least more special than others — gels. It looks a fair team, perhaps good enough to win next week.

England finalised their team last night after David Lloyd, the manager, and David Graveney, the tour manager, met the players. Lloyd would say only that all 14 members of the party will

be involved over the weekend. Alistair Brown, of Surrey, will certainly open the batting, possibly with Nick Knight, who has some ground to make up after missing the whole of the last international summer. Knight is one of nine players here who are not going to the Caribbean next month. Instead, he will lead the A team on its tour of Kenya and Sri Lanka.

Hollioake is joined by Stewart, Thorpe, Headley and Croft of the senior touring team. The people who appear to have the best chance of making a significant impression in the next fortnight are Douggie Brown, the Warwickshire all-rounder, and Matthew Fleming, who was called up as a replacement when Darren Gough opted to stay at home for domestic reasons.

Fleming is a late developer, but, with bat and ball, he has been a key player in the Kent team that has reached two one-day finals in the past couple of seasons. He vies with Douggie Brown and his own Kent team-mate, Ealham, for an all-rounder's place. The biggest beneficiary of all, though, may well be Hick. Now that he is happier, apparently, than at any time

since he emerged as the star in waiting a decade ago, he is the likely replacement batsman should any misfortune occur in the West Indies to the selected players.

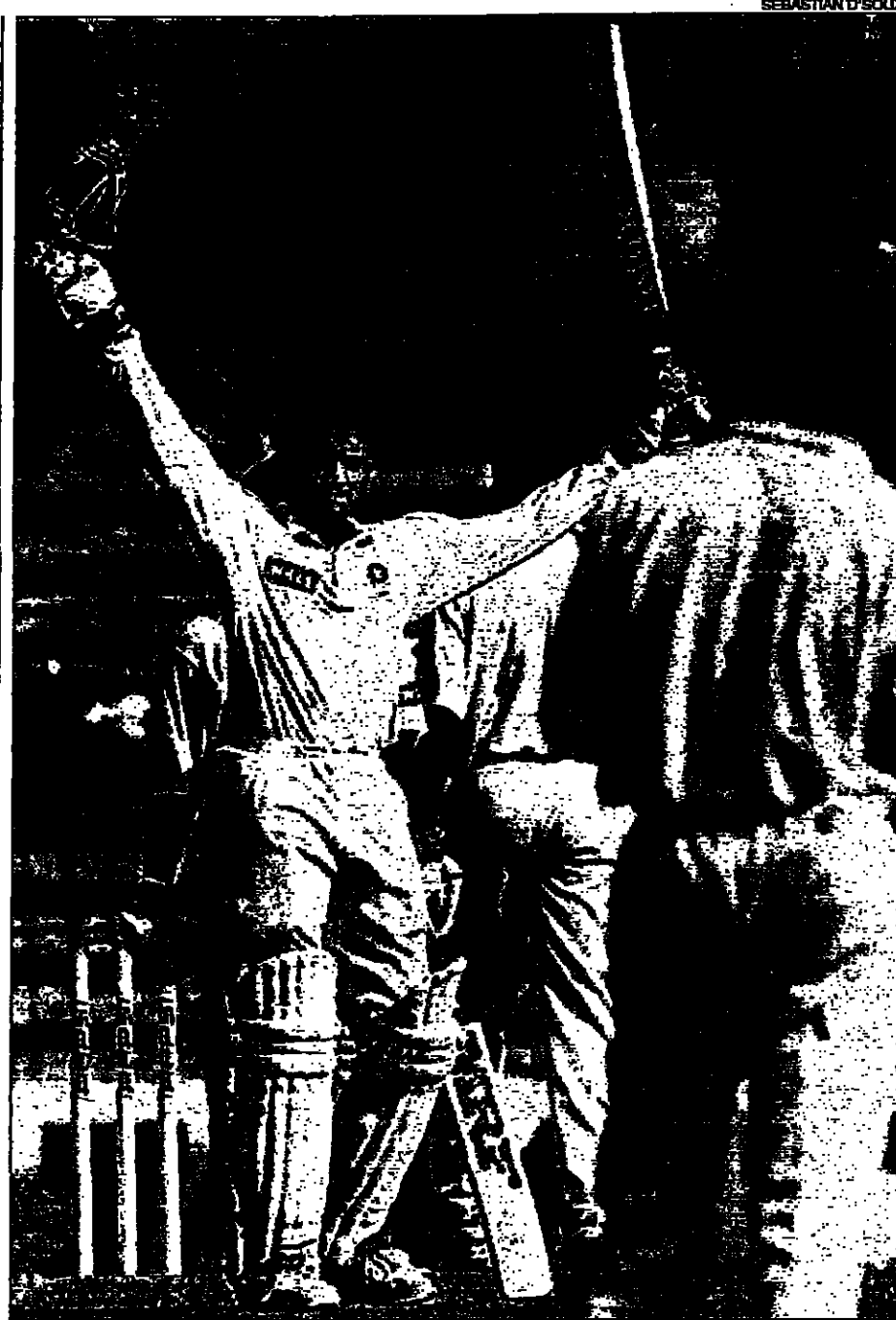
Pakistan A will be led by Aqib Javed, the former Hampshire pace bowler, who has fallen from favour in the eyes of the Test selectors. Their team also includes Shahid Afridi, who holds the record for the fastest century in one-day international cricket, and Shahid Nazir, who played for the senior side in the first Test against West Indies.

Northamptonshire and Worcestershire yesterday stepped up their efforts to sign Devon Malcolm after his announcement that he had rejected Derbyshire's offer of a new contract. The competing counties have held preliminary talks with the England fast bowler, 34, in recent weeks after he became a free agent on November 1, despite Derbyshire's hopes of persuading him to stay.

Worcestershire are believed to be favourites for his services. John Chadd, the Worcestershire cricket committee chairman, said: "We have spoken with Devon and although you never take anything for granted until the name is on the contract, we are reasonably confident of signing him."

Yorkshire have ruled out further negotiations with the owners of Headingley, aimed at resolving their long-running dispute and exploring the possibility of developing the Test venue. Preliminary discussions into an application for Lottery funding to upgrade Headingley broke down on Wednesday night, with Yorkshire accusing Paul Coddick, the chairman of the company that owns the ground, of "uncompromising tactics".

Derbyshire plans to play one-day matches for Somerset next season, the county has confirmed. Reeve, 34, was forced to stop playing in 1996 because of an arthritis hip, having led Warwickshire to six trophies in the previous three summers.



Ganguly acknowledges his 150 as India control the third Test against Sri Lanka

Tendulkar leads from the front

INDIA'S last seven wickets fell for 46 runs as their first innings closed at 512 on the second day of the third and final Test against Sri Lanka in Bombay.

The home side were 466 for three at tea with Sachin Tendulkar, their captain, and Sourav Ganguly scoring centuries. Ganguly was caught behind when he missed a sweep off the spin of Kumar Dharmasena. He did not add to his tea score of 173. Tendulkar followed four runs later, bowled by Ravindra Pushpakumara for 148.

The pair added 256 for the fourth wicket, a record for India surpassing the previous high of 222 between Vijay

Hazare and Vijay Manjrekar against England at Headingley in 1952. They put India in an unassailable position after resuming at 247 for three before the rest of the team collapsed.

Tendulkar, who has been retained as captain for three one-day internationals against Sri Lanka and the four-nation Sharjah Cup, extended his tenure and silenced his critics with brilliant strokeplay as he reached his 14th Test century. In addition, he broke through the 4,000-run barrier with a six off Dharmasena.

INDIA: First Innings
1st Innings: Tendulkar 173, Ganguly 148, Hazare 100, Manjrekar 80, Kulkarni 50, Kulkarni 40, Kulkarni 30, Kulkarni 20, Kulkarni 10, Kulkarni 5, Kulkarni 1, Kulkarni 0.

SL: First Innings
1st Innings: Jayasuriya 111, Aravinda de Silva 80, Mahipal Thakur 50, Mahipal Thakur 40, Mahipal Thakur 30, Mahipal Thakur 20, Mahipal Thakur 10, Mahipal Thakur 5, Mahipal Thakur 1, Mahipal Thakur 0.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-125, 2-215, 3-215, 4-471, 5-471, 6-471, 7-471, 8-471, 9-471, 10-471, 11-471, 12-471, 13-471, 14-471, 15-471, 16-471, 17-471, 18-471, 19-471, 20-471, 21-471, 22-471, 23-471, 24-471, 25-471, 26-471, 27-471, 28-471, 29-471, 30-471, 31-471, 32-471, 33-471, 34-471, 35-471, 36-471, 37-471, 38-471, 39-471, 40-471, 41-471, 42-471, 43-471, 44-471, 45-471, 46-471, 47-471, 48-471, 49-471, 50-471, 51-471, 52-471, 53-471, 54-471, 55-471, 56-471, 57-471, 58-471, 59-471, 60-471, 61-471, 62-471, 63-471, 64-471, 65-471, 66-471, 67-471, 68-471, 69-471, 70-471, 71-471, 72-471, 73-471, 74-471, 75-471, 76-471, 77-471, 78-471, 79-471, 80-471, 81-471, 82-471, 83-471, 84-471, 85-471, 86-471, 87-471, 88-471, 89-471, 90-471, 91-471, 92-471, 93-471, 94-471, 95-471, 96-471, 97-471, 98-471, 99-471, 100-471, 101-471, 102-471, 103-471, 104-471, 105-471, 106-471, 107-471, 108-471, 109-471, 110-471, 111-471, 112-471, 113-471, 114-471, 115-471, 116-471, 117-471, 118-471, 119-471, 120-471, 121-471, 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RACING: FAVOURITE BACKERS COUNT COST AS ZARALASKA FAILS TO JUSTIFY CONFIDENCE

Wahiba Sands taxes old certainties

By Chris McGrath

NOTHING is certain, according to Benjamin Franklin, except death and taxes. No matter how eloquently their own experience tells them otherwise, punters will persist in trying to add the occasional horse to that brief list. Franklin's shade was no doubt at Leicester yesterday, knowingly shaking its head, to witness the defeat of Zaralaska at odds of 5-1.

A winner at the royal meeting, Zaralaska had made a dramatic impression when returning to Ascot for his first start over timber 13 days ago. His natural aptitude for hur-

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: Country Bean

(1.00 Sandown Park)

The well-regarded Country Bean should be spotted on after a pleasing debut over hurdles behind Cherrymont 2nd. No doubt recently and can win the best novice race of the season at Sandown today.

NB: Noisy Miner

(2.05 Sandown Park)

dling put many people in mind of Alderbrook, a similar sort on the flat before winning the 1995 Champion Hurdle — not least bookmakers, who quoted Zaralaska as low as 1-4 to emulate that success at Cheltenham in March.

There were those perplexed to find him contesting yesterday's lowly Knight Novices' Hurdle, particularly in view of a history of training problems on the flat. Few, however, could have envisaged that he would encounter a new, insurmountable problem in the



Wahiba Sands survives an untidy jump at the last hurdle to eclipse Zaralaska at Leicester yesterday

shape of Wahiba Sands, a rare runner over hurdles for John Dunlop.

Restrained off a slow early pace by Adrian Maguire, Zaralaska again jumped slickly before moving into contention turning for home. His every move, however, was shadowed by Tony McCoy on Wahiba Sands, himself a decent handicapper on the level and receiving 7lb.

As Zaralaska led two out, Wahiba Sands followed him through, going equally well, and McCoy pounced soon afterwards. While Maguire shook up his mount, his rival was in such serene control that he soon despaired; eased, Zaralaska was beaten four lengths, a dozen clear of a competent yardstick in 17m Maggy.

David Nicholson, Zaralaska's trainer, said: "They've gone no gallop and it turned into a sprint. But he has jumped well and will now go to Kempton for the novice hurdle on Boxing Day."

Dunlop, detained at Tattersalls Sales, missed his first National Hunt winner, but Wahiba Sands is apparently heading to Ascot on December 20. Coral expects more of the same there, having replaced

Zaralaska with Wahiba Sands at 16-1 in its Champion Hurdle book. "By contrast, things continue to fall predictably into place for Martin Pipe. The champion trainer has a full hand of juvenile aces, and the success of the favourite Vent D'Aout in the opener added to the congestion of Pipe-trained horses — along with The French Furze and Rainwatch — at the

head of the Triumph Hurdle betting. Somehow, life is never so straightforward for his rivals. Steve Brookshaw, the trainer of Lord Gyllene, yesterday confirmed that the Martell Grand National winner will miss the whole season because of his leg injury.

Happily, the return of another hobbling Aintree hero remains imminent — despite Terry Casey, trainer of Rough Quest, reporting a further setback yesterday. "He has bruised the sole of his off-forefoot," Casey said. "There's no way he can run at Chesham on Saturday, but he should be able to run the following weekend."

Rough Quest could now resurface in the Tommy Whitte Chase at Haydock — a race that has not yet been dismissed for Simply Dashing, despite his prominence in betting on the King George VI Chase on Boxing Day. With equivocal noises about Kempton also emerging from the Sun Bay card, punters wishing to oppose One Man yesterday resorted to Barton Bank. Coral go 8-1 from 12-1 about the old warrior.

Another shock, Major Dick Hern, was back in the winner's enclosure at Windsor yesterday. Hern, who only recently handed in his training licence, emerged among the partnership that owns George Bull — 20-1 winner of the Spital Novices' Hurdle (Division II), and bred by his wife, Sheila.

George Bull outbatted Better Off, who had been sent off at 3-1 on. It was not much of a day for the credulous punter. Remember: death and taxes.

Murphy handed 30-day whip ban

TIMMY MURPHY, who has enjoyed a splendid start to his new job with Paul Nicholls, was yesterday brought to earth by a 30-day suspension for persistent whip offences (Chris McGrath writes).

Under the "trotting up" procedure, Murphy was automatically referred to the Jockey Club disciplinary committee for his treatment of Bramblehill Buck at Newton Abbot on November 18, having already served 15 days in whip bans over the previous 12 months. Ten days of the ban, which starts on Tuesday, have been suspended for six months, but Murphy misses the ride on Belmont King in the Coral Welsh National at Chesham on December 27.

Murphy, 23, has shown himself an accomplished jockey in riding 30 winners this season, in the process restoring lost momentum to his career. But his visit to Portman Square yesterday must prompt him to accept the need for some refinement.

"Timmy has put his hands up and admitted he was wrong," Nicholls said. "But there is no way Bramblehill Buck was injured after Newton Abbot. I got my vet to look at the horse the next day and he confirmed he was 100 per cent."

The in-form trainer intends to give his inexperienced back-up riders, Joe Tizzard and Liam Cummins, plenty of opportunities during Murphy's absence, but senior replacements are likely to be sought at Chesham for Belmont King and What a Hand.

HOCKEY

England hopefuls seek to impress

By Sydney Friskin

BARRY DANCER, the new England coach, and his team of observers will watch a double bill of premier division matches tomorrow and on Sunday. The purpose is to add a few more names to the list of 26 chosen for a four-day training camp at Lillshall, starting on Monday.

Apart from the prospect of selection for the World Cup, there is the added incentive for the players of settling old scores, as in the case of Teddington, who entertain Southgate in the return match on Sunday. Southgate won the first meeting 7-2 and also defeated Teddington 4-1 in the fourth round of the EHA Cup.

Both teams will be at full strength with Teddington believing they have turned the corner and Southgate admitting that the opposition will be a hard nut to crack.

Ian Hughes-Rowlands has recovered from illness, and will be back for Cannock, who lead the table, one point ahead of Southgate and East Grinstead.

Cannock are at home tomorrow to Barford Tigers, whom they defeated 4-1 earlier this season. On Sunday, they visit Doncaster who have put behind them the memory of their 8-1 defeat by Cannock and are playing with renewed confidence, having reached the quarter-finals of the EHA Cup.

Alan Stoves, the Doncaster player-coach, said yesterday that his team had learnt valuable lessons, and would be ready for Cannock's sharpshooters. "On paper, everyone would expect them to beat us, but they lost 6-1 to Canterbury, and we lost 4-3," he said.

Canterbury, who are not short of sharpshooters themselves, will be the team to watch this weekend as they attempt to elevate themselves from fourth position with matches against Old Loughborough and Guildford. Both matches are away from home.

Five enjoy famous adventure

By Cathy Harris

THE FIVE England players who refused to leave Leicester when they were relegated from the premier division last season, have played a leading role in maintaining the club's unbeaten record at the top of the first division. Victory over Wimbledon tomorrow would enable them to move in to the winter break exactly where they planned to be.

The decision by the Olympians, Joe Mould, Sarah Blanks, Purdy Miller and the teenagers, Carol Voss and Kirsty Bowden, was heavily criticised. Doubts were expressed about their ability to compete at the top level without playing against England's best and, with the World Cup just over five months away, there was concern about whether they could adjust to take on the world's best.

The bold move by young players appears to have been vindicated. Maggie Sotayue, the England coach, said: "I'm happy with the decision this year," before adding: "if you take five players out of a club it can destroy it. But if they don't earn promotion, players who aspire to international hockey will have to think very carefully about their future."

Bowden, 19, is one of the brightest young talents in the game and the midfield player is certain to be included in the World Cup squad. A law student at Birmingham University, she believes the club did not deserve to be relegated. "We didn't perform to our potential and got in to a losing trend," she said. "We all wanted to stay and get the side back up and we've all taken on more responsibility."

Three points clear of their nearest rivals, Canterbury, the club have their sights set on an immediate return, according to Kevin Blanks, their manager. "We may have five internationals but the whole squad has achieved our results. Playing Wimbledon won't be easy because they are battlers but at the beginning of the season we aimed to win every game. We're on course."

SEADOWN PARK

1.00 Golden Eagle 2.35 Oats Regrets
1.30 Bangers Moor 3.10 What a Hand
2.05 Cherrymont 3.40 Majesty

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (GOOD IN PLACES)

TOTE JACKPOT MEETING

1.00 DECEMBER NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE

(€3,152; 2m 110yds) (21 runners)

402-1 DINES 27 (5) (T) Cherrymont 5-11-4 T J Murphy 115
103 121-12 STANLEY 15 (10) (T) Cherrymont 5-11-4 T J Murphy 115
104 0-0 ASK IN THE 21 (10) (T) Cherrymont 5-11-4 T J Murphy 115
105 0-0 GOLD PIONEER 20 (10) (T) Cherrymont 5-11-4 T J Murphy 115
106 0-0 BUCKINGHAM 20 (10) (T) Cherrymont 5-11-4 T J Murphy 115
107 0-0 BRACEY 20 (10) (T) Cherrymont 5-11-4 T J Murphy 115
108 120-02 BRUSH UP 13 (5) (T) Cherrymont 5-11-4 T J Murphy 115
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WORLD CUP 98

WHO PLAYS WHOM

WHERE AND WHEN



THE TEAMS AND THE VENUES

TEAMS

The 1998 World Cup will be the biggest yet with 32 teams competing in 64 matches. Europe provides 15 places (including France, the hosts), Africa five, South America five (including Brazil, the holders), Asia four and three from north and central America.

VENUES AND DATES

The first ball is kicked on June 10. For the first time teams will play all their group matches in different stadiums. There are ten in all, two in Paris and one in Bordeaux, Lens, Lyons, Marseilles, Montpellier, Nantes, St Etienne and Toulouse. The final will be at the Stade de France in Paris on July 12.

THE WORLD CUP FINAL

July 12, 9pm
St Denis (Paris)

July 7, 9pm
3RD PLACE PLAY-OFF

SEMI-FINALS

QUARTER-FINALS

July 3, 9pm
July 4, 4.30pm

FINAL SIXTEEN

June 27, 9pm
June 28, 9pm
June 29, 9pm
June 30, 9pm

GROUP A

SCOTLAND Have never missed a World Cup final. The holders and favourites. Superb attack but less strong defence. Odds: 3-1.
MOROCCO Despite not winning their previous World Cup, an upbeat mood prevails. Top teams will provide the test. Odds: 80-1.
NORWAY Should have plenty of support in France to cheer on a better team than the one that failed in USA 94. Odds: 200-1.
WHOEVER Says that Norway are dull should recall May this year when they beat Brazil. A team to avoid. Odds: 25-1.

June 10: 5.30pm St Denis (Paris)
Brazil v Scotland
9pm Montpellier
Morocco v Norway

June 16: 9pm Nantes
Brazil v Morocco
5.30pm Bordeaux
Scotland v Norway

June 23: 9pm Marseilles
Brazil v Norway
9pm Saint-Etienne
Scotland v Morocco

GROUP B

ITALY 13 times in the finals and usually one of the favourites, but recent games have been far from convincing. Odds: 5-1.
CHILE First time in finals for 18 years. Excellent forwards but a defence that tends to leak goals. Odds: 50-1.
CAMEROON Third finals place in a row but prospects dimmer than in 1990 when they gave England a fright. Odds: 100-1.
AUSTRIA Solid and reliable - could prove tough to beat. Much improved from team that failed to reach Euro 96. Odds: 80-1.

June 11: 5.30pm Bordeaux
Italy v Chile
9pm Toulouse
Cameroon v Austria

June 17: 9pm Montpellier
Italy v Cameroon
5.30pm Saint-Etienne
Chile v Austria

June 23: 4pm Saint-Denis (Paris)
Italy v Austria
4pm Nantes
Chile v Cameroon

GROUP C

FRANCE Have never reached the final but now they might. Potential is there but will they perform at their best? Odds: 5-1.
SOUTH AFRICA First time in finals and with a core of seasoned players. Have run top teams close. Odds: 150-1.
SAUDI ARABIA Second time in finals after good showing in USA 94. Skilled young side with all-round strengths. Odds: 200-1.
DENMARK Only second time in finals and nothing like the fine side of 1986. Lacked inspiration in same qualifiers. Odds: 40-1.

June 12: 9pm Marseilles
France v South Africa
5.30pm Lens
Saudi Arabia v Denmark

June 18: 9pm Saint-Denis (Paris)
France v Saudi Arabia
4pm Bordeaux
South Africa v Denmark

June 24: 4pm Lyons
France v Denmark
4pm Toulouse
South Africa v Saudi Arabia

GROUP D

SPAIN Unbeaten for three seasons now and ranked third in the world. Serious contenders, few flaws. Odds: 12-1.
NIGERIA No one doubts the skills of the Olympic gold medal winners. An African champion? The only contender. Odds: 25-1.
PARAGUAY Full of self-belief after some fine results in qualifiers. Potentially strong in all areas. Tough customers. Odds: 66-1.
BULGARIA Many of the same team as in the 1994 finals. But their outstanding players may not last the pace. Odds: 40-1.

June 13: 7.30pm Nantes
Spain v Nigeria
June 12: 2.30pm Montpellier
Paraguay v Bulgaria

June 19: 9pm Saint-Etienne
Spain v Paraguay
5.30pm Parc des Princes
Nigeria v Bulgaria

June 24: 9pm Lens
Spain v Bulgaria
9pm Toulouse
Nigeria v Paraguay

GROUP E

GERMANY Who would bet against a semi-final place in 1998? Good individuals but unconvincing as a team. Odds: 80-1.
UNITED STATES Third successive finals appearance but for a team prone to self-doubt progress may be limited. Odds: 7-1.
YUGOSLAVIA Third successive finals appearance but for a team prone to self-doubt progress may be limited. Odds: 200-1.
IRAN Spectacular playoff win showed off their time forward. Improving all the time and could cause shocks. Odds: 33-1.
ROMANIA Somewhat lucky to be in the finals but register at least one victory. It may not happen. Odds: 200-1.

June 18: 9pm Parc des Princes
Germany v USA
June 14: 2.30pm Saint-Etienne
Yugoslavia v Iran

June 23: 5.30pm Lens
Germany v Yugoslavia
9pm Lyons
USA v Iran

June 29: 9pm Montpellier
Germany v Iran
9pm Nantes
USA v Yugoslavia

GROUP F

ARGENTINA Arguably the weakest of the eight seeds. Very strong in the qualifiers but the finals are another story. Odds: 40-1.
COLOMBIA Have never gone past the second round. As usual they have huge talent but can they work as a team? Odds: 33-1.
ENGLAND Not a top seed but one of the top five or six and pushing at the right time. Young players maturing. Odds: 7-1.
TUNISIA Impressive in the qualifiers, now well-organised and planning confidence. Certainly will not be pushovers. Odds: 250-1.

June 18: 5.30pm Lyons
Romania v Colombia
2.30pm Marseilles
England v Tunisia

June 22: 9pm Toulouse
Romania v England
5.30pm Montpellier
Colombia v Tunisia

June 28: 9pm Saint-Denis
Romania v Tunisia
9pm Lens
Colombia v England

GROUP G

WINNERS twice, and immensely talented, but the parts may not be as great as the whole. Odds: 14-1.
JAPAN Hosts of the 2002 World Cup, squeezed in this time. Sideline players but lacking experience and self-belief. Odds: 250-1.
ARGENTINA First time in the finals and lots of players are suddenly finding their roots to try and join the Reggae Boyz. Odds: 250-1.
CROATIA Underestimated in the seeding but Euro 96 proved that this is a team to watch. Odds: 40-1.

June 14: 5.30pm Toulouse
Argentina v Japan
9pm Lens
Jamaica v Croatia

June 21: 9pm Parc des Princes
Argentina v Jamaica
June 28: 5.30pm Nantes
Japan v Croatia

June 28: 4pm Bordeaux
Argentina v Croatia
4pm Lyons
Japan v Jamaica

GROUP H

WINNERS twice, and immensely talented, but the parts may not be as great as the whole. Odds: 14-1.
JAPAN Hosts of the 2002 World Cup, squeezed in this time. Sideline players but lacking experience and self-belief. Odds: 250-1.
ARGENTINA First time in the finals and lots of players are suddenly finding their roots to try and join the Reggae Boyz. Odds: 250-1.
CROATIA Underestimated in the seeding but Euro 96 proved that this is a team to watch. Odds: 40-1.

June 14: 5.30pm Toulouse
Argentina v Japan
9pm Lens
Jamaica v Croatia

June 21: 9pm Parc des Princes
Argentina v Jamaica
June 28: 5.30pm Nantes
Japan v Croatia

June 28: 4pm Bordeaux
Argentina v Croatia
4pm Lyons
Japan v Jamaica

NANTES: STADE DE LA BEAUVOIRE
Capacity 40,000

ST-DENIS: STADE DE FRANCE
Capacity 80,000

LENS: FELIX-BOLLADY
Capacity 42,000

PARIS: PARC DES PRINCES
Capacity 49,500

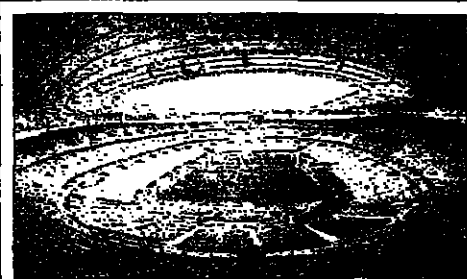
LYONS: STADE DE GERMAIN
Capacity 41,000

TOULOUSE: STADIUM MUNICIPAL
Capacity 37,000

ST-ETIENNE: STADE GIEFFROY-GUICHARD
Capacity 36,000

BORDEAUX: PARC LESCURE
Capacity 36,500

MONTPELLIER: STADE DE LA MOSSON
Capacity 35,500



ST-DENIS: STADE DE FRANCE
France's new national stadium is on the road between the centre of Paris and Charles de Gaulle Airport. Built for the World Cup, both the opening ceremony and final will take place here.



MARSEILLES: STADE VELODROME
In the heart of the fiercely independent capital of the south of France, this stadium hosts four group games, one second round game, one quarter-final and the first semi-final.

Spain
test
nerve
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Beckham
approves
of new ball

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WORLD CUP 98

Spain face test of nerve in hard draw

ROB HUGHES



Chief Sports Writer

IT IS an uncommon wind that blows nobody any ill. The mistral that had gusted through Marseilles relented for the World Cup draw and yet left its mark on the scattered seeds. Those who will be pleased must include Argentina and Italy, two giants of World Cup history who have the closest thing to what can be described as easy groups in which to play. Germany, the perennial of European representation, may not be ecstatic at facing a resurgent Yugoslav nation; but they should dispose of the United States and Iran.

Yes, America versus the country that, politically, nobody thought it was ready to play. But, politics aside for the moment, if the hosts France have also a comparatively gentle opening group, and Holland see nothing to fear... where lies the vaunted "Group of Death" that everyone wanted to sidestep?

It is, appropriately, group D — Spain, Nigeria, Paraguay and Bulgaria. For two to fall from that quarter is indeed a test of nerve and courage and Spain, which has built up a promising and resolute squad, must now face the music. Bulgaria are always underestimated, always wily and ready to damage somebody; Hristo Stoichkov, who keeps retiring and changing his mind, will probably lead his country with malice aforethought in terms of damaging Spain, the country where, occasionally, he plays for Barcelona. The Paraguayans, without an outstanding striker but cunningly organised by a Brazilian coach, will be nobody's fools.

And Nigeria? Once they find a coach, and if their interfering government gives them time and opportunity to prepare, who says that this African nation of almost 100 million people will not reveal the force, the pace, the extraordinary skills that won the 1996 Olympic title?

How thrilling it was to see Nwankwo Kanu, the young captain of that Olympic side, in the Stade Velodrome last night. The chill wind tugged at his neck, he looked cold but he wore the smile of a man who has come back after undergoing surgery for a heart complaint that doctors initially said would mean a sedentary life.

Those who look for the easy life have no place in what is coming at the biggest World Cup, the most gargantuan exposure of 64 games in France next June and July.

If Kanu is hoping to return then France, its opportunity opening like a rose, may have found, in a place not too far from the draw ceremony, the striker it needs to convert the midfield creation of Zinedine Zidane and company. He is just 20, not rated in Paris where he had trials with Paris St Germain, but given his opportunity at Monaco. The goals have flowed

from David Trezeguet in Europe this season and France will test him out in good time for the tournament.

With or without him, France should prevail against the determined, but physical, South Africans, a Denmark team that is not of the opportunist calibre of the 1992 European champions, and Saudi Arabia, who can be neat and technically proficient.

And if Scotland only have to take on Brazil in the opening game, if England register quiet satisfaction at the task of smothering the Colombian octopus, Faustino Asprilla, where in the world is there reason to enter a sporting contest with anything other than combative relish?

Be thankful that the English supporters, understandably fearful of being fenced in after the 96 deaths against the railings of Hillsborough eight years ago, have avoided, at least in round one, the two grounds (St Etienne and Nantes) which still have those cages. Be thankful too, that there is no political influence, as indubitably there is facing the American goalkeeper, Kasey Keller. He gulped when his country drew Germany for starters. "Just what you want," he observed ironically, "the perennial powerhouse of World Cup soccer. Still, it's in Paris, that should be nice."

Keller took a second deep breath when Iran became an opponent. "Interesting political line-up," he said laconically. There had been, leading up to the last World Cup in America, all manner of political threats to exclude Iran, had they qualified. However, after Iran became the 32nd and last finalist on Sunday, an American used the Internet to congratulate an Iranian acquaintance. "Nice to see Iran back in the World Cup," he typed, "after the tragedy of Khomeini's crazy anti-sport policies."

Back came the message online: "We are delighted the rest of the world cares. For the first time in 20 years, Iranians smiled. They rushed to the streets and danced. They forced Revolutionary Guards to dance with them — a taboo in the radical sector. The leader of the revolution has not published his congratulatory message but President Khatami and ex-president Rafsanjani were first to congratulate the players."

After more astonishing and revealing insights the e-mail concluded: "Wait and see Iranian lions in the France World Cup. They will show the world. They will change the perverted image. France, we are coming to change the pages of history."

Just one of the nations coming in a multitude of languages, of hope, of declarations that the World Cup is for everyone, and no match is a foregone conclusion.



Waving the flag: the World Cup draw ceremony gets under way in Marseilles yesterday

Overblown ceremony both tacky and unnecessary

Simon Barnes bemoans the fuss and hype surrounding what ought to be a simple exercise

IT WAS the morning of the flag-paper that was a day too far. The lead picture on *The Times* sports pages was a fat old man wearing a suit. He was holding up a flag-paper. On the flag-paper was the laconic, brutally enigmatic message: "Brazil".

World Cups are good, at least, if you are if you like football. And if you hold a World Cup, you obviously have to decide who plays whom, where they do so, and when. So some kind of draw is necessary. I am prepared to go that far down the road with the flag-paper carriers of this world.

But how long does it take to draw 32 names from a hat? Those of us who used to listen to FA Cup draws at Monday lunch-time, in the days when football did not drop its knickers every time a television camera was sighted on the horizon, know perfectly well that it takes about five minutes.

Within that modest time-span, a performance of dignity, and one not without mystery, can be organised. So how long has it taken FIFA and the French organisers to draw 32 names? About a week.

Big story of the first day: will England be seeded? Big story of the second day: England are not seeded. Disaster!

This really matters. It is really serious. And perhaps if so-and-so far to win their group on goal difference, that could mean that England have to play them as early as the round of 16. That's if they get that far! How perfectly frightful that would be!

We are deep into Emperor's-new-clothes territory here. Because it is

interesting to know who is going to play whom, but it doesn't matter. A tough draw is often an advantage. You win World Cups by getting on a roll, not by having an easy draw. Something happens to a team round about the third group game and the first knockout game. Suddenly they are rocket-fuel.

That is more likely to be the result of winning tough, and winning ugly, than of swallowing a Concaaf minnow. England's intriguing draw could be disaster — too hard, too soft, or just right.

As for Scotland, they invariably play better against Brazil than against Costa Rica. It is not the draw that matters: but how you play football. More precisely, how a team grows in the course of the tournament.

But football, like all sport, is suffused with its own self-importance. When the World Cup starts, football will seriously believe that it is the most important thing on the planet. So now the draw is being held; and they try to tell us that is the most important thing on the planet.

Sport and its media coverage is increasingly full of Not Sport. Cheats, money, politics, attempts to buy governments, that sort of thing. There is no help for it as sport grows daily, almost hourly,

richer and more powerful. But for some bizarre reason, the world has been conned into an increasing love of Not Sport. The hottest ticket at the last Olympic Games was not the men's 100 metres final but the opening ceremony. Never mind something sublime and unique: I want something tacky and samey, please.

The World Cup draw has become the opening ceremony's opening ceremony: a tacky unnecessary prelude to a tacky unnecessary prelude. Not Sport has been taken a stage further. Pelé received his quadrilateral snub. And 38,000 people turned up to watch it all. Were they mad?

The final hour of the draw itself was perfectly conceived as the world's most univerting piece of television.

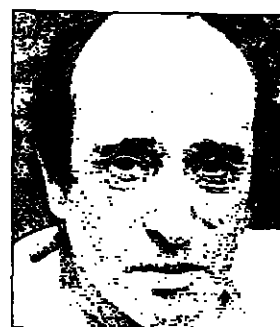
It was interminable. What is more, gratuitously interminable. Spinning out a mildly interesting five minutes into a full hour does not give you a mildly interesting hour. It makes you fed up with the whole thing before it starts.

There is truth and beauty to be found in sport: but it can only be found in action. And that is harder and harder to find in the floodwaters of Not Sport. Even television prefers action replay to action.

Sport mislays its pith and moment and loses the name of action. This week has brought us footballing megalomania *ad absurdum*. Moral: any footballing action that snubs Pelé is not worth an intelligent person's time. Certainly not a full week of it.

Global affair has become blown out of all proportion

BRIAN GLANVILLE



on the history of a grandiose tradition

THERE was, alas, no Robin Williams to puncture the pomposity of the World Cup draw in Marseilles last night. Four years ago, Fifa, in its star-struck folly, decided to hold the draw in Las Vegas, deluded perhaps by the city's claim to be "the entertainment capital of America".

Unlike New York, whose claims for such a title were surely stronger, Las Vegas had no tradition or connection with football. The occasion was marred from the start by the spiteful decision of Fifa's ineffectual president, João Havelange, to exclude Pelé from the dias, because he had been suing Havelange's son-in-law, Ricardo Teixeira, the President of the Brazilian Football Federation. Pelé, in his habitual white suit, entered the hall just the same.

Various noisy singers performed, then Williams stepped up to help with the draw. "Wonderful to meet you," he greeted the bemused Fifa secretary, Sepp Blatter, "after feeling you all these years." He then put his hand in the drum and announced: "Ah pany-hose!" Next day, an American journalist wrote that Blatter's ideal future was quite clearly as a straight man.

These grandiose presentations do seem to have their elements of farce. When the ceremony took place in Rome, in 1989, the presiding showbusiness lady seemed to have little awareness of what she was doing. But then, over the years, the World Cup has become an increasingly grandiose, not to say over-populated, event.

How different things were when the tournament began in 1930, when Uruguay, winners of the previous two Olympic tournaments, were the hosts. It took three weeks to sail from Europe to Montevideo, and countries such as Italy, Hungary, Austria, Spain and Germany could not be bothered to enter. The British countries, who were not then members of Fifa, were ineligible. France, after initial vacillation, agreed to go since the whole idea of the competition had been theirs and, indeed, the trophy was named after their recently-elected Football Association president, Jules Rimet.

Romania also agreed, but to get the players released King Carol had personally to go round the big

oil companies where most of them were employed to intercede for them. Uruguay, who won the Cup, paid every team's expenses and still made a good profit.

When Italy put on the 1934 tournament, Uruguay sullenly refused to come and Argentina sent a weakened squad. In her inhumanity, she refused that the Italian clubs would steal more of their players on the dubious grounds of double nationality. In the event, no fewer than three Argentinians played in the Italy team that won the final.

In 1938, the Civil War ruled Spain out of the tournament in France and the Anschluss ruled out Austria, whose players were incorporated into a Greater German team. England were asked to make up the numbers, though still not a member of Fifa, but the Football Association refused.

It is astonishing to reflect that only 13 of the invited 16 teams competed in Brazil in 1950. Argentina, traditionally at odds with Brazilian football, refused to attend, as did Czechoslovakia. France withdrew in protest at the colossal distances they would have to travel. Austria said that their team was too young. In the event, Uruguay, the eventual winners, played only one game in their eliminating pool against Bolivia, which they won 8-0.

Fifa had decreed that the British international championship should act as one of the qualifying groups, the top two teams being admitted to the tournament. Scotland, in a sublime burst of hubris, announced that they would go only if they won the championship. They did not: England beat them 1-0 at Hampden Park in the decisive match. Billy Wright, the England captain, pleaded with George Young, his opposite number, to persuade the Scotland officials to change their minds, but they were obdurate.

The 1954 tournament in Switzerland had a full complement of teams and, bizarrely, West Germany beat Hungary 3-2 in the final, despite losing to them 8-3 in their first game.

The election of Havelange to the Fifa presidency in 1974 led to the bloating of the competition to 24 teams and next year, in France, to 32. And the World Cup draw has been bloated accordingly.



Ronaldo, who scored twice for the Rest of the World team in their 5-2 victory over Europe, evades a lunging tackle yesterday

Beckham approves of new ball

DAVID BECKHAM, the England midfielder, is looking forward to passing and shooting with the Tricolore ball to be used in France next summer. "It is faster and sharper," Beckham said, "and I think that in World Cup 98 it is going to be harder for goalkeepers to make saves with this ball."

Adidas aims to sell three million of the balls, which is decorated with the red, white and blue colours of the French flag and other national symbols such as the rooster, the France mascot, TGV, the French high-speed train. There are 32 panels on the ball — one for each of the competing teams — and its synthetic construction is claimed to give a more consistent trajectory, greater accuracy and speed of flight.

French polish for football's biggest feast

BY JOHN GOODBODY

FOR France, the World Cup party is ready to begin. With work completed on the new 80,000-seat stadium in Paris, the French are well ahead with their preparations for the sixteenth World Cup finals next summer. Unlike so many international sports events of recent years, there are no evident problems in the financing or building projects for the 32-country tournament, which will be the largest and most publicised in 68-year history of the competition.

Only the Olympic Games attracts more global interest than the World Cup because football is the national game of most countries. 169 nations entered the qualifying competition for next year's finals.

The World Cup owes a particular debt to France, which last staged the event in 1938, eight years after the first tournament in 1930 when only 13 countries entered. The tournament was created by a Frenchman, Jules Rimet, who gave his name to the first trophy, which

was won for the third time and thus outright by Brazil in 1970.

To delight television viewers across the world, there will be two opening ceremonies. The first will be in Paris on June 9. This will be a colourful parade, led by five giant models, representing the five continents, through the streets of the capital. The models will finally assemble in the Place de la Concorde, close to the River Seine, with its view up the Champs-Élysées to the Arc de Triomphe.

The next day, there will be another ceremony at the new Stade de France in St Denis in northern Paris, which will stage its first international on January 28 when France meet Spain in a friendly. The stadium is on the other side of the capital from the 49,700-capacity Parc des Princes, built in 1972, and is replacing it as the French national stadium. However, the Parc des Princes will still be used for matches during the World Cup.

The opening game at the Stade de France will feature Brazil, the holders, against Scotland. Unlike

ON MONDAY IN THE TIMES

A free 16-page guide to the World Cup finals, including how, where and when to watch matches in France and the prospects of the 32 contenders

earlier World Cups, the 32 competing nations will play all their three preliminary pool fixtures in different cities. The top two from the eight groups will go through to the last 16, when the straight knockout

stage gets under way. In previous tournaments, the teams have often been able to stay at one hotel close to those stadiums, which have staged all their early matches. However, this time many of the countries are planning to be based near Paris and move round the country, either by bus or plane. The organisers' chief problem will be the transport and housing of the supporters, particularly in the knockout rounds.

The nine cities which will hold matches are Paris, Marseilles, with its 60,000-seat velodrome stadium, Lyon, Nantes, Bordeaux, Montpellier, Lens, St Etienne and Toulouse. Lyon has the smallest capacity with seats for only 32,000 spectators.

The Stade de France, the most modern stadium in Europe, will host nine matches in the championship, including the final. It has been closely studied by architects hoping to get the contract for the design for the rebuilding of Wembley, which England hopes to use as the centrepiece of a World Cup in the 21st century.

The pressure on getting tickets will be enormous, because the tournament is taking place in Europe, where interest in football is so high and where more countries (15) play in the finals than from any other continent. However, the organisers are commendably not making exorbitant demands on the paying spectators. About one-fifth of the 2.5 million will cost less than £16 and one half will be less than £27.

TICKETS

ENGLAND supporters must join the Members Club set up by the Football Association (16, Lancaster Gate, London W2 3LW). SCOTLAND supporters must have already joined the Scottish Travel Club. The Scottish Football Association (6, Park Gardens, Glasgow G3 7YE) is expecting an allocation of 6,000 tickets for preliminary matches and it has more than 11,000 members of its Travel Club.

Ronaldo grabs the limelight

RONALDO gave the world an indication of what it can expect from Brazil next summer by scoring twice in the Rest of the World's 5-2 victory over Europe in the World Cup gala match in Marseilles yesterday. The world's most expensive footballer, valued at £20 million, was irrepressible as he set up the Rest of the World's other three goals.

Paul Ince, the England midfielder player, and Scotland's Gordon Durie, who came on in the second half, played for a Europe team that took the lead through Marius Lacatus, of Romania, in the second minute. Ronaldo created goals for Antony De Avila, of Colombia, and two for Gabriel Batistuta, of Argentina. Zinedine Zidane, of France, pulled a goal back on the hour.

RUGBY UNION: ENGLAND SEEK TO END AUTUMN SERIES ON WINNING NOTE AT TWICKENHAM

Healey quick to profit from versatility

AUSTIN HEALEY has not always agreed with Bob Dwyer, his coach at Leicester, but the decision to switch him from scrum half to wing six weeks ago now appears to be a sound investment. Yesterday Healey was named on England's left wing against New Zealand at Twickenham tomorrow. It will be only the second occasion on which he has started a game for his country.

This, with one exception, is the England team that finished the first encounter with the All Blacks at Old Trafford a fortnight ago, though it shows six changes — one positional — from the XV beaten by South Africa last weekend. The exception is Paul Grayson, who replaces the injured Mike Catt at fly half. Grayson will be

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

partnered by Kyran Bracken, whose greater physical presence at scrum half gives him the slightest of edges over Matt Dawson. Grayson's Northampton team-mate, England will benefit from the returning experience of Martin Johnson and Phil de Glanville, while David Rees reverts to the right wing to allow for Healey's inclusion. Clive Woodward, the coach, was in no doubt about the issue central to Healey's selection: he brings more pace than either John Bentley or Adeyado Adebayo and, for one who has the reputation as a Jack the Lad, Healey has impressed with his attitude recently.

"He is a genuine footballer and he has been outstanding in training," Woodward said. "He deserves his place on

merit and I think he is starting to believe that what has happened in Leicester has been good for him. We have two outstanding guys at No 9 and Austin realises that."

Healey, one of the three British Isles scrum halves to tour South Africa during the summer, found himself restored to his old Waterloo and

SQUAD

M B Perry (Bath); D L Rees (Sale); W J H Greenwell (Leicester); P R de Glanville (Bath); A S Healey (Leicester); P J Grayson (Northampton); K P P Breckon (Bristol); J Leonard (Worcester); R Costantini (Leicester); D J Gifford (Leicester); M O Johnson (Newcastle); L B N Dwyer (Worcester); N A Beck (Leicester); R A Hill (Gloucester); R G Simpson (Newcastle); M J S Dawson (Northampton); C M A Sheehy (Worcester); D J Gwynne (Bristol); K Yates (Bath); M P Regan (Bath)

sembled a giant endeavouring to swat an annoying fly.

Bentley and Adebayo, the two disappointed wings, will know precisely their future after the autumn series, since Woodward intends to draw up a pecking order for each position. "I want to let the players know where they stand," Woodward said. "We have seen the best players these southern-hemisphere sides have and, after this weekend, I can be brutally honest about which of our players have the best chance of staying in the squad, regardless of reputations."

"We know the criteria needed to beat these guys. We are not in the first division, but I think we can get there. The feedback from the players has been great. They all have a glint in their eye, they know

what it takes to win at this level. It's easier to put in a one-off performance, to put in four in a row has made it very clear what has to happen for England to succeed. If we had played weaker countries, I might have been overconfident about our real strength."

Overconfidence is not a New Zealand trait and the loss of Sean Fitzpatrick from most of this tour was followed yesterday by the withdrawal of Craig Dowd, his colleague in the Auckland front row, who has a hamstring injury.

Fitzpatrick will make no decision about his playing future until April, but there are fears that the damage to his right knee and cumulative wear-and-tear will prove too much, even for this hugely competitive player to return to the international arena.

Heritage at the heart of All Blacks' success

John Hopkins finds the New Zealand coach in talkative mood before the game with England

The Old Trafford scenes after the Martin Johnson incident, the bustle about the haka, the Paul Ackford criticism. That's all negative. We don't need that sort of thing to get us motivated. We have won 11 Tests against the best teams in the world this year. Our motivation comes from within. It is self-driven."

Thus spoke John Hart, the New Zealand coach, early yesterday morning. His enthusiasm lit up the darkness that had not yet lifted outside the window. Hart was bubbling over as he talked about the game against England at Twickenham tomorrow.

"It is Zinzan Brooke's hundredth game as an All Black. Olo Brown's fiftieth game for New Zealand. Sean Fitzpatrick, one of the great New Zealand captains, not being able to play — these are the things that motivate us. We owe it to the heritage of what we have done to play well. We owe it to the heritage of the jersey."

Hart, 52, may have scored a try in his first game of rugby and played for Auckland, his province, as a feisty scrum half, but it was when he turned to coaching that he began to make people sit up and take notice. Twice he was rejected for the All Blacks job before succeeding at his third attempt, on the day of his 50th birthday. Since then the All Blacks have played 22 Test matches and lost one.

Recently, Hart spent two hours with Alex Ferguson, the



The New Zealand players listen intently as Hart holds court during training at Bracknell Rugby Club yesterday

Manchester United manager, talking coaching, talking about staying ahead, talking management techniques. Indeed, talk is the abiding memory of Hart, his conversation resembling a rushing stream.

Yet Normal rugby words, such as prop, kick, gain-line and angles of running are not mentioned. Were it not for his rugby shirt and his logo of a New Zealand beer company, he could have been a management consultant, pausing for a pot of tea and a slice of toast on the way to sort out the problems.

So it was management tech-

niques, not a rugby manual, that enabled him to become the first New Zealander to coach an All Black team to victory in South Africa. He started coaching the All Blacks after working as head of human resources for New Zealand's biggest company.

When Hart puts on his glasses, his cheery, round face becomes slightly owlish. He looks like a management-suit type. At these moments there is nothing to suggest that he comes from the land where there are more sheep than people, where almost every former All Black coach has been a former All Black or a

farmer, and sometimes both. "My deficiencies as a player have helped me in my coaching," Hart said. "It's a strength, not a weakness, not to have been an All Black. My experiences in business were the most beneficial experiences to me as a rugby coach. A lot of the techniques I learnt there I translated into rugby."

In his mid-20s, Hart led the negotiating team to resolve an industrial dispute over redundancy that had closed the Mangere Bridge in Auckland for 25 years. "My job was to build a relationship with the unions and then the workforce," he said. "We had to

employ the people who had previously been on the job — hardened riggers, welders, men who had put a picket on the bridge for 30 months, who were fighting for their livelihood, and get them on our side."

"I did it by building relationships by trust, demonstrating we were genuine in our intentions. It was an example of what can be achieved by common sense, by man-management, by treating people as I wanted to be treated, by being thoughtful. A lot of the things I learnt from that time were important to me for coaching."

It was the same with Auckland. He arrived to coach New Zealand's most famous province when it had great names and talent but a sloppiness that offended his clear business mind. Initially, he faced scepticism. Andy Haden, for one, doubted Hart's ability.

Hart adopted the classic management technique. He got Haden on his side to such effect that Haden, once a foe, became his best lieutenant. Auckland, who before Hart had never won the national championships, won it the year Hart took over, twice more, and came second in the two remaining years.

"In the past, coaching was autocratic," Hart said. "My style is shared leadership. Why can the All Blacks do so well when the captain is missing? I try and grow leadership across the field, I encourage personal responsibility. My players are not told what to do, we create an environment and let them decide. I have a saying: 'We play as we train and we train as we play.' We have worked tremendously hard on up-skilling players."

"If I were coaching in the northern hemisphere, I would work a lot more on players' fitness, speed. I would watch the men under pressure. Northern hemisphere coaches are very regimented. I encourage my players and I accept their mistakes. Christian Cullen is 21, has played in 21 Tests and has scored 21 tries. In one game against South Africa, he made two mistakes and that led to two tries. I did not mind. He scored more tries than anyone else."

"There is wonderful enthusiasm for the game in England. Look at last weekend — 160,000 people attended two matches in London. But the game is too conservative, players are too reluctant to experiment."

SPORT IN BRIEF

Chaloner keeps his cool to down Eyles

■ SQUASH: Mark Chaloner, of England, recorded the best victory of his career yesterday when he defeated the world champion, Rodney Eyles, of Australia, 15-10, 10-15, 15-9, 15-10 to reach the semi-finals of the Mahindra International Challenge at the Cricket Club of India, Bombay (Colin McQuillan writes).

Chaloner, ranked No 14 in the world, handled the extreme humidity better than the 30-year-old Australian, who wilted as the match progressed. Chaloner, 25, of Lincolnshire, said: "I am fitter than most other players and used to pushing myself beyond anything. The conditions here impose just on themselves."

He will meet Peter Nicol, of Scotland, the second-seeded champion, who defeated Simon Parke, the England No 1, in a fast, subtle and highly entertaining match, 17-15, 15-9, 15-11. Jansher Khan, the world No 1, appeared lethargic in defeating Derek Ryan, of Ireland, 15-8, 15-9, 15-8.

New partner for Offiah

■ RUGBY LEAGUE: London Broncos yesterday signed John Timu, 27, the former All Black full back and centre, from the Sydney-based Canterbury Bulldogs (Christopher Irvine writes). Timu was capped on 21 occasions between 1989 and 1994. The dual-code international will team up at the Stoop Memorial Ground next season with Martin Offiah, in what Tony Currie, the London coach, described as the "most potent centre-wing combination" in the world.

"John is a devastating runner and playmaker," Currie said. "His arrival provides us with an awesome combination with Martin that should have most teams worried."

Green light for White

■ SNOOKER: Jimmy White, an ever-present at the Benson and Henson Masters since 1982, has been awarded the sponsor's wild card to compete in this season's event at Wembley Conference Centre in February.

White, who will meet Stephen Lee in the first round of the £35,000 tournament, was forced to rely upon an invitation after being relegated from the top 16 players in the world at the end of the 1996-97 campaign and failing to win the Benson and Hedges championship.

Clarke still the top man

■ CYCLING: Barrie Clarke, Team Raleigh's national cyclo-cross champion, remains the top rider in the latest British rankings list with a total of 579 points, a lead of 135 from Stuart Blunt. Steve Knight is third, a further five points behind.

Clarke leads Britain's team of Blunt, Carl Sturgeon, James Norfolk and Martin Seddon in tomorrow's third round of the World Cup competition near Milan and will miss the South of England championship at Southampton, one of five home regional title races, on Sunday.

No progress for Pierce

■ TENNIS: Anke Huber, right, from Germany, beat Mary Pierce 6-3, 6-2 in the masters of champions women's tournament in Frankfurt yesterday to end the French woman's prospects of progress to the semi-finals on Saturday. Pierce had been beaten by Martina Hingis, the world No 1 from Switzerland, in her first match. In the other group, Iva Majoli, of Croatia, beat Irina Spirlea, of Romania, 6-3, 7-5 yesterday.



Roy Kivell dies

■ BOWLS: Roy Kivell, the immediate past president of the World Indoor Bowls Council (WIBC), died in Exeter yesterday. Kivell, 77, had attended a meeting of the WIBC in London on Wednesday. A legend in the sport, he joined the Exonia club at ten, won his first titles before he was 21, and made his first appearance for England on grass in 1947, when he was 27. He made 66 outdoor appearances for his country, collecting 22 caps.

GOLF

Montgomery soon out of the running

THERE was little joy for a trio of Britons on the first day of the Million Dollar Challenge in Sun City, South Africa. Colin Montgomerie, the defending champion, all but disappeared from contention with a 78 yesterday as Phil Mickelson, from the United States, moved into a one-shot lead with a 67.

Nick Faldo shot a 73 and Ian Woosnam had a 74, along with the Americans Justin Leonard and Tom Lehman.

Davis Love III, who trailed Mickelson by a shot after a four-under-par 68, received a watch valued at \$100,000 (about £60,000) for an eagle

on the par-five 9th. But it was the left-handed Mickelson who topped the leaderboard in this elite 12-man event after a round that included seven birdies — five of them on the back nine — and two bogeys. "Having the lead is a positive in that it means I'm playing well," Mickelson said. "But I don't want to get overly excited about it."

Mickelson, 27, found that a combination of the swirling wind and the hot air at altitude made club selection difficult. Jesper Parnevik, of Sweden, had a round of 70 and Nick Price, of Zimbabwe, a 71.

Auckland announces plans for Blackheath

THE link-up between the world's best and world's oldest rugby union clubs became reality yesterday when John Baird and Graham Henry, the acting chief executive and coach of Auckland Blues, revealed their plans for Blackheath (a special correspondent writes). Announcing a £500,000 investment in the Allied Dunbar Premiership second division club, Baird and Henry said that Blackheath could become the Auckland Blues of England within five to seven years.

Henry said: "We are not looking to perform miracles and it will take a season or

two, but there will be changes in the way Blackheath play immediately. The current squad have players capable of first division rugby. It will only need one or two extras to add fat to the bones." Baird said that Auckland would be sending a few players over to England, but the development of local talent was the key to progress. "We want to fast-track Blackheath in the world of professional rugby. We will bring our system of development over here. It isn't about money, it is about doing things a better, smarter way, the Auckland way," he said.

Injured pride spurs Wainwright

By KEVIN FERRIE

HE HAS learnt the lessons of two seasons ago, when he was persuaded by a tabloid newspaper to dress as Robert Bruce on the eve of a Grand Slam decider. In the wake of that defeat by England at Murrayfield, Rob Wainwright was haunted by the image, used as a wrap-around cover but discarded around Edinburgh supporters.

It was a rare misjudgment on Wainwright's part, but as a consequence there was never any likelihood of breast-beating declarations of devotion to the cause after his unexpected recall to the Scotland team to play the world champions, South Africa, tomorrow.

Instead, the qualified doctor, reinstated as captain, explained his recovery in cold medical terms. "I was initially told the head injury I suffered at the end of October would require a six week lay-off," he said. "However it felt all right last week and when I pushed it there was no problem."

There is little doubt, though, that he forced the issue because the injury-ridden Scots needed him. That position was underlined yesterday when Grant McKelvey, the hooker, withdrew. Stewart Campbell, the lock, remains doubtful with a calf problem. McKelvey is replaced by the

Glasgow and West of Scotland captain, Gordon Bulloch, who will make his debut. Jim Hay, of Hawick, comes in on the bench. A decision on Campbell will be made today. All this followed the withdrawal of Alan Tait and James Craig earlier this week and the fact that Scotland's other British Isles forwards, Tom Smith and Doddie Weir, were among those unavailable. Little wonder then that immediately after the humiliating defeat by Australia last month, Wainwright was visibly disturbed when told that Adam Hastings, his deputy in the No 6 jersey, had suffered concussion and would be sidelined for the mandatory three weeks.

As Scotland's chances receded, the captain has been stung by suggestions that there are those in the squad who regard this match as a good one to miss. Clearly, however, the selection of the other seven forwards who faced Australia is not so much a vote of confidence as a gamble that they will attempt to find reserves that they themselves did not know they.

South Africa, too, had to make a late change after a knee injury forced the fly half, Henry Honiball, to withdraw yesterday. He is replaced by Jannie De Beer.

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Larger than life — man who made the people happy



Shankly, cast in bronze, towers over Roy Evans.

Bill Shankly's colour was always red: to-day, and in perpetuity, it is bronze. For a 7ft 6in statue of Shankly, the creator of the modern Liverpool club, was unveiled outside Anfield yesterday.

Liverpool, who under Shankly, Bob Paisley, Joe Fagan and Kenny Dalglish rose to an unrivalled position in English football, are forward-looking. But how heart-warming it was to slip back into the past, to be in Shankly's company once again and to remember when Liverpool was not only the omnipotent club, but also the people's club.

His former players were there by the score. And as they glided around the trophy room — Hunt, Callaghan, Byrne and company — one recalled how much they won, and how little ego they displayed.

They may all be a little out of touch, thicker around the waist and greyer at the tem-

ples but nostalgia is an imperative part of sport, and Liverpool have it in greater abundance than almost any other club.

Before the unveiling of the Shankly statue there was time to reflect that the city of Liverpool, its unemployment having obliged tens of thousands to migrate, is not as vibrant as Manchester. The northern Reds are divided, with Manchester United embracing the modern game's commercialism as Liverpool's ability to sustain a friendly and family spirit is challenged by the need to make sure they retain a regular place in European competition.

It was slightly sad to see Roy Evans, that eminently decent man, a youth player under Shankly, backed up against a wall — within sight of the new statue — and made, on this of all days, to defend his recent record. Ridiculous. Evans has all but recaptured what Shankly and

Rob Hughes attends a moving Anfield unveiling of a permanent memorial to a legendary football man and manager

all he was the proud son of a Scottish tailor.

But Murphy, with the triumphant stance, the set of the mouth, and the laughter lines around the eyes has captured the absolute essence of the man. Shankly loved football more than he loved life, and he loved one particular footballer to wit excess.

"He has just stepped out of the shower. Come in and see him... have a walk around him. He's a colossus!" The "colossus", Ron Yeats by name, had been purchased from Dundee United in 1961 at the same time that Shankly brought Ian St John from Motherwell.

It was the start of something special. Liverpool came out of the second division and Shankly built two separate

championship sides, the second which his aide, Paisley, took on to conquer Europe.

Without saying a word yesterday, Yeats, who cut the tape to unveil the bronze, managed to convey all of his pride and sheer joy at being chosen for the honour. Nessie Shankly, who had selected Yeats from all her husband's players, and Jessie, Bob Paisley's widow, then, with similarly dignified pleasure, opened the visitors' centre.

I suspect that Shankly would not be totally enamoured to be stood outside a McDonald's restaurant, another part of the new facilities built near where the masses once stood on the Spion Kop. The fact that Carlsberg, the club sponsors, had paid for and commissioned the tribute, would have brought an ironic twinkle to his eye. But there is no escaping the new age of commercialisation.

Peter Robinson, the chief executive, who has been at the administrative helm through the last three decades and Rick Parry, who takes over at the end of this season, both appreciated yesterday the glow of the past, and the great challenges that lie ahead.

Liverpool, one fervently hopes, can be challenged again, can bring off the small miracle of retaining humility while striving for the hardness that modern football seems to demand.

There will, next season, be new Paisley Gates, just as there are Shankly Gates, and yesterday, as past and present were linked, the former players standing inside those gates did not forget the people outside.

They walked across, shook hands, signed autographs, and led one elderly lady through the gates to lay her bouquet at the foot of the statue. She read the inscription: "Bill Shankly 1913-1981. He made the people happy."

FOOTBALL

Harford left high and dry as Albion seek compensation

BY RICHARD HOBSON

WHEN Ray Harford resigned as manager of West Bromwich Albion late on Wednesday evening, he hoped for a smooth passage into a similar job at Queens Park Rangers. Instead, his worst fears were realised yesterday when Albion refused to accept his resignation, claiming that they required six months' notice of his intention to leave.

Albion have taken the stand to help their case for compensation from Rangers rather than in the hope that Harford will change his mind. They say that they will continue to require six months' notice of his intention to leave.

Harford met Tony Hale, the Albion chairman, for less than ten minutes yesterday lunchtime and left without comment, looking even more stony-faced than usual. QPR

cancelled plans to unveil Harford as their new manager in the afternoon and declined to comment on developments.

Earlier, Harford, appointed by Hale just ten months ago, had stressed that his decision was based purely on a wish to be closer to his home in Berkshire. He consistently refused to sign a contract with Albion because of a stipulation that he must live within a 25-mile radius of the ground. Hale said that the clause was eventually removed.

Albion had refused QPR permission to talk to Harford and are claiming compensation because of a verbal commitment and his contract of employment. Hale, flanked by a legal adviser, said that he had spoken to representatives from QPR yesterday, but added: "At this moment we are not having constructive talks. I

would like to think that QPR are in a more invidious position than our own. I expect Mr Harford to be in charge of our game against Stockport on Saturday."

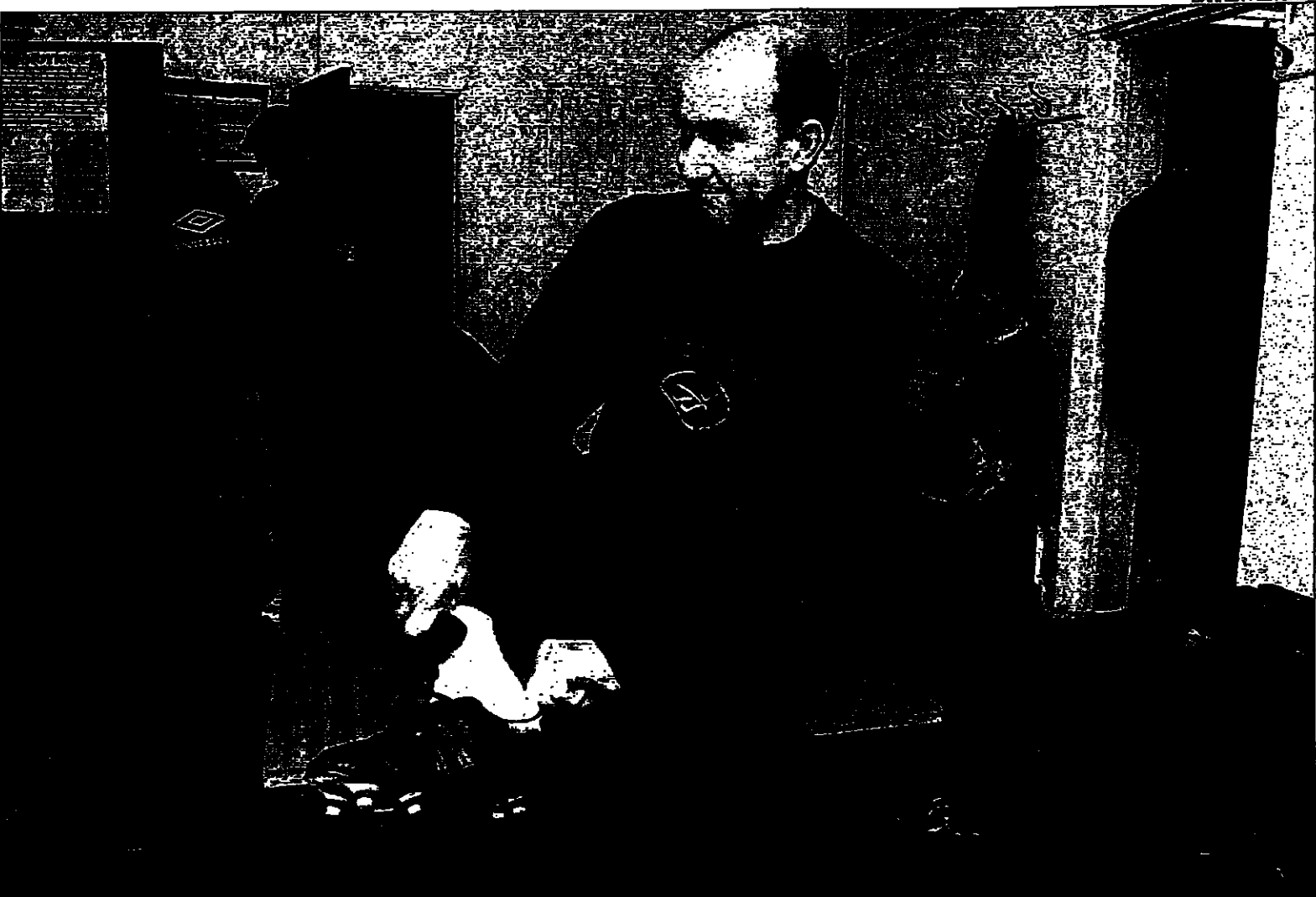
Hale said that he accepted Harford's explanation but felt "very bitter and totally used". Harford led Albion away from the Nationwide League first division relegation area last season and they are fourth at present. "He was nowhere, and we resurrected his career," Hale said. "I am not letting him get away with it."

John Barnwell, chief executive of the League Managers Association, believes that the Football League should adopt the Premier League regulation, where compensation is paid inside 28 days when a manager walks out of one club to join another. He described the present position as "vague and loose".

John Trewick, the coach under Harford, is in operating control of Albion's first team squad and will be a strong candidate when the club acknowledge that the managerial position is vacant. Another contender is David Platt, dismissed by Sheffield Wednesday last month.

Mark Bosnich has been given clearance by Terry Venables, the Australia coach, to play for Aston Villa in the UEFA Cup third-round, second-leg tie against Steaua Bucharest on Tuesday. He will join the rest of the Australia squad for the Fifa-backed Confederation Cup, which begins on December 12, immediately after the game.

Denis Irwin, the Manchester United full back, could return to competitive action on Boxing Day, against Everton. Irwin, who sustained knee ligament damage in a bad tackle by Paul Bosvelt, the Feyenoord midfielder player, has made quicker than expected recovery.



Nineteen years after his stunning FA Cup debut with Chelsea, Walker goes in search of another scalp against Boreham Wood tomorrow

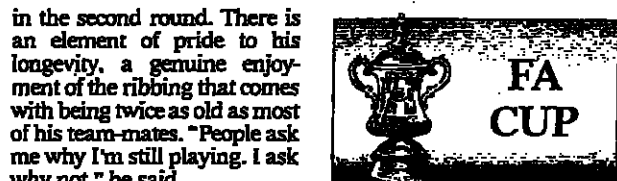
Walker fortified for final tilt at glory

Alan Lee meets the veteran forward hoping that Cheltenham Town can provide the stage for one more great Cup adventure

The script was faithful to the character. Out of work, almost out of mind, Clive Walker was tempted to revive his abandoned playing career at Cheltenham Town and, within a week, scored the goal that put the Vauxhall Conference side into the second round of the FA Cup.

Walker has scored goals all his eventful footballing life, all 24 years of it. Now, aged 40, he looks more relieved than surprised to be involved in one more Cup fantasy, a reunion with his former Chelsea striking partner, Kerry Dixon, who will be in the Boreham Wood side that comes to Whaddon Road tomorrow to contest a third-round place.

Relaxing this week before a frosty training night, Walker cheerfully wondered aloud if he would be the oldest player



in the second round. There is an element of pride to his longevity, a genuine enjoyment of the ribbing that comes with being twice as old as most of his team-mates. "People ask me why I'm still playing, I ask why not," he said.

It is 19 years since he made his FA Cup debut, and at a somewhat more elevated level than he will experience this week. Liverpool, the European champions, were expected to win at Stamford Bridge, but Chelsea beat them 4-2 and Walker, 21, scored twice.

Slim, speedy and with a mane long since vanished, Walker was always an exciting talent on the left flank. Brought up in Oxford, he had

played for England Schoolboys alongside Ray Wilkins. Then, at 16, they both became apprentices at Chelsea.

Walker spent 11 years at Stamford Bridge and resents the suspicion that he was a rebel. "I suppose we were the second generation King's Road set," he said. "We wanted to be like Alan Hudson and Peter Osmond but we never quite made it, we were always

in their shadows." A move to Sunderland in 1984 showed that Walker had not lost the art of headline-grabbing. His new club drew Chelsea in a League Cup semi-final and Walker taunted the Stamford Bridge crowd with two goals. It was all too much for one Chelsea fan, a bricklayer, who spent the night in a cell after running on the pitch to attack Walker.

He missed a penalty in the Wembley final — inevitably, he was the first to do so — but he was destined to return. After spells at Queens Park Rangers, Fulham and Brighton, he moved to football's twilight zone, semi-professional with Woking. It was hardly a quiet life, though.

Woking won the FA Trophy after that, for a variety of reasons, "he said with evident sadness. "It had been a good time for me there and I found it hard to think of playing for

anyone else, so although I did the pre-season training this year and played friendlies for a few different teams, I didn't have a club. I wasn't sure if I'd retired or not."

Brendford solved his dilemma by making him assistant manager, but the job lasted only 11 weeks before he crossed with Micky Adams in football's eternal revolving door. "I wasn't given a chance, so it hasn't put me off management, but if I do it again, be it in six months or six years, I'd like the authority to be making my own decisions," he said.

The limbo that followed dismissal was short-lived. "In the next two days I had four or five clubs on the phone, asking me to play." One such call was from Steve Cotterill, the Cheltenham manager. "I had a few months at Brighton with Clive and knew he would be good for us," Cotterill said. "He was sacked on the Wednesday, I phoned him on the Thursday and he signed on the Friday."

A week later, Walker scored the winner against Truro Town, another Cup run under way. "I never really got to grips with not playing," he said. "Perhaps I hadn't mourned it, hadn't really accepted I should retire." Perhaps he never will.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL	not out; England XI 233-4 (N V Knight 78, A D Brown 67, A J Stewart 78 not out). England won original match by nine wickets, reaching 145-1 from 19-4 overs.
EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP Semi-final round Group C: England 61 Lithuania 59 (at Gdansk Stadium).	FOOTBALL
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NAB) Boston 67, Chicago 67, Detroit 108, Phoenix 103 (O 107), Miami 64, Philadelphia 50, New Jersey 69, Seattle 32, Denver 68, Los Angeles 107, Minnesota 90, Indiana 54, Utah 115, Toronto 88, Vancouver 97, Colorado 101, Golden State 67, Cleveland 58.	INTERNATIONAL MATCH: Marseille, Europe 2, Poland of the World 5. Wednesday's results: 1. Poland 1-0, 2. Poland 1-0.
CRICKET	WORLD CUP PREMIERSHIP: West Ham United 4 Crystal Palace 1. 1. Arsenal 1-0, 2. Arsenal 1-0.

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Advice for the victims of documentaries

According to Stephen Tompkinson's narration: "A thick fog had descended upon the part of Dover." Opening lines don't really come across as exciting, do they? I tried to work up a bit of enthusiasm — a thick fog, eh? Great — but it was no good. For in truth, a thick fog descended on the series of *Dover* (ITV) at the outset, and halfway through, shows no sign of lifting. What chance can it possibly have against the combined fly-on-the-wall might of *Animal Hospital* (BBC) and the sun and squeals of *Holiday Rhapsody*?

My heart went out to the men and women in fluorescent anoraks who must have imagined that life would somehow be different once the cameras arrived, who must have dreamt of their big moment — be it a "sorry mate, you can't park here" or a "is this your vehicle, sir?" — being watched by ten million. But even as I sym-

pathised, I realised that for once there was something I could do about it. I'm going into counselling.

In exchange for a relatively modest fee, I will work with those traumatised by a documentary encounter, helping them, eventually, to address the big question: "What happens when the cameras go away?" No longer will impressionable young men and women have to go through life glancing nervously to the left, convinced that there is a video camera mounted on the passenger seat of the car. Help is at hand.

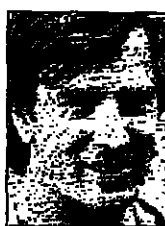
On the basis of last night's triple helping, I expect to be treating two categories of patients. The first are those suffering from post-documentary withdrawal (PDW), a relatively mild condition often characterised by a need loudly to confide intimate secrets in public places. After therapy, sufferers such as Caroline from *Minors* should no longer feel the need to

rush off to the nearest cafe, face the same way as her best friend and shriek about her new boyfriend. Serious problems, such as convincing Caroline that she is not on the shelf at 22, could take longer.

PDW therapy would also include vets unable to make a diagnosis without Rolf Harris being in the room, sniffer dogs who won't work without the scent of videotape in their nostrils and holiday reps still suffering the consequences of ill-advised swimsuit shots. Anything more serious, however, and we're dealing with the more chronic condition: PDS, post-documentary shock.

PDS sufferers will receive long-term care and take part in group therapy sessions. A typical group might be composed of a Royal Opera House employee, a Bath rugby player, a member of the Jockey Club and anyone who has ever answered a lonely hearts ad

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

or got married on television. It's just such a group that could welcome Eve's Munn, whose first encounter with her daughter's boyfriend was so painfully captured on camera last night. "He's about your height, Eve — unusual for you to have a short boyfriend." To be fair, Eve's Munn looked quite happy with that as an opening gambit, but cases of delayed PDS are increasingly common.

So too are those whose PDS condition is complicated by BHS, bobby head syndrome. These poor unfortunates are men (I'm afraid they are nearly always men) who, for one embarrassing reason or another, have to forgo their 15 seconds of fame by having their features disguised by a pixelated blob. There were two more candidates last night — one from *Dover*, one from *Animal Hospital* — but they will not be the last. This could have been their one and only chance to be on television. My work will be important. Please give generously.

You should give even more generously if you don't want me to give away the plot of *ER* (Sky 1). No, come back, I joke, I joke. We may be seven episodes into a series that won't appear on Channel 4 until next year, but it just so happens that last night's episode was the sort of episode I can write about without giving away too

much. This, in short, was the oddest episode of *ER* that I can recall — not so much *ER*, the hospital series, more *ER*, the road movie. Hot Californian deserts, endless roads, twanging guitars, the full genre disaster. In place of Nicolas Cage and Laura Dern we had Dr Ross (George Clooney) and Dr Green (Anthony Edwards) hitting that minty highway. Green put on sunglasses and tried to look mean. Quite successful really, but then he's a different man in this series. No more Mr Nice Guy.

The reason they were driving across the desert (and here I do have to reveal a bit of plot) is that Ross's father had died in a drink-drive car crash, taking his new wife and a lorry driver with him. Cue the sort of self-indulgent, sentimental, soul-searching episode they would never dream of attempting on *Casualty* (always assuming they

had enough regulars left for a bit of soul-searching) but on *ER* they can get away with it. If Doug and Mark want to drive around in a fin-tailed gas-guzzler (conveniently for the director of photography, this was Doug's principal legacy) and agonise about love and father-son relationships, that was fine.

For the two actors this was a chance for some sunshine and fresh air, while for the camera operators it was a break from all that wobbly, handheld stuff they have to do in the studio. And for us? For us, it was a curious episode that repaired much of the damage recently done to Doug and Mark's friendship (damage that I obviously can't discuss) and finished with the sort of magnificently glibly finale that might have embarrassed even Richard Gere. As the two doctors made their way to the motel, a third cast member appeared silhouetted at the end of the veranda. Think Neil Sedaka.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (71327)
7.00am BBC Breakfast News (76785)
9.00am Red Hair Day: A series of programmes celebrating redheads beginning with *Can't Cook, Won't Cook* (1421414)

9.25am Style Challenge Making the most of russet locks (1400921)
9.50am Kilroy (1248211)
10.30am Good Living: Red Hair Day Special: A mistletoe chandelier, instant puddings, using frozen fruits, how to entice the robin into the garden (1925476)

10.55am The Really Useful Show Health tips for red-heads, the link between red hair and asthma (1924292)
11.30am Change That In Durham (3134230)
11.55am The Weather Show (2838360)
12.00pm News (964308)

12.05pm Call My Bluff (288501)
12.35pm Give Us A Clue (5548389)
1.00pm News (779872)
1.30pm Regional News and weather (17600230)
1.40pm Neighbours (17294292)

2.00pm Lucy and Desi: Behind the Laughter (1991) Biopic of showbiz stars Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. Directed by Charles Jarrott (181853)
3.30pm Playdays (1797468) 3.50pm Dear Mr Barker (2387383) 4.05pm The All New Poppy Show (2435300) 4.10pm Casper (1958414) 4.25pm Second Breakers (12856124) 5.00pm Newsround (15134579) 5.10pm Blue Peter (15653747)

5.35pm Neighbours (1711501)
6.00pm News (779872)
6.30pm Regional News Magazine (360)
7.00pm Weekend Watchdog with Anne Robinson (11292)
7.30pm Top of the Pops (1672)

8.00pm 999 Lifesavers: A couple stranded at sea with their dog following an explosion aboard a yacht, how to salvage an accident-prone pet (15740)
8.30pm Only Fools and Horses: Del and Rodney mourn Grandad's death (17) (6747)
9.00pm News (17) regional news and weather (2389)

9.30pm Hatty Watkinson Investigates: A concerned mother hires Hatty to find out who is stalking her daughter just days before her wedding (1) (865001)
10.20pm The Wogan Years with Bette Midler: The live performances by Bette Midler (1997) (852292) 10.30pm One Night Only (85124) 10.50pm The Wogan Years (503259) 11.25pm Social Action Week 1997 (852292) 11.30pm FILM: Greedy (1994) (334872) 12.00am The Police in Concert (8003411) 2.20pm Weather (4203821) 2.25pm BBC News 24 (1994) (1994)

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1.40pm Weather (756438)
1.45pm BBC News 24 (1993)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode numbers to help you find the right programme. The Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder to find the right programme, are listed in the Video PlusCode section of the programme guide. VideoPlus+ is a trademark of General Development Ltd.

BBC2

6.00am Social Science: Global Tourism (82308) 6.30pm My Favourite Things (47785)
7.00pm See Hear: Broadcast News (7 and signing) (5440698)
7.15pm Teletubbies (1) (2637898) 7.40pm The Parole of Penelope Pliston (1) (8087259) 8.05pm Smart (1) (7) (6284748) 8.30pm William's Wish Wellingtons (2282679) 8.35pm Wishing (1) (825747)

8.45pm The Record (2440196) 9.10pm Music Makers (4305827) 9.30pm Watch (955124) 9.45pm Come Outside (951673) 10.00pm Teletubbies (1) (2637898) 10.30pm Look and Read (6519037) 10.50pm The Art (652501) 11.10pm Landmarks (1) (9828056) 11.30pm English Film (4124) 12.00pm Scene (14209)

12.30pm Working Lunch (37211) 1.00pm The Little Polar Bear (1) (33124872) 1.05pm Pingu (1) (3312143) 1.10pm The History Hour: Adam Hart-Davis explores the history of the jet, from the Wright brothers to Concorde (1) (2020766) 2.10pm Going, Going, Gone (6487474) 2.40pm News (17) (7020766)

2.45pm Tennis: The ATP: Senior Tour of Champions: Sue Barker introduces coverage of Bjorn Borg's best-of-two-sets match with John McEnroe at the Albert Hall (181853)
3.25pm News (17) (7767394) 3.50pm The Village (1) (783) 4.20pm Ready Steady Cook (1) (1) 4.30pm Through the Keyhole (2855450) 4.55pm Esther: Circus Life (5234921) 5.30pm Today's the Day (227)

6.00pm The Simpsons: A birthday gift gives Bart an idea for a practical joke. Featuring the voice of Sting (1) (893389)
6.20pm Star Trek (1) (1) (208259)
7.15pm Electric Circus (106801)
7.30pm Earth and Life: James Lovelock, controversial scientist and originator of the Gaia hypothesis, talks about his vision of the Earth as a self-regulating entity (1) (414)

8.00pm War Walks II: Boyne Richard (1994) (1994) Holmes visits the site of the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland, where James II was defeated by William III in 1690 (1) (5852)
8.30pm Hamilton's Paradise Gardens (1) (1) (4389)
9.00pm Shooting Stars (1) (1) (3259)

9.30pm The Show Show: Comedy sketches with Paul Whitehouse, Chasie, Hilson and Caroline Aherne (24747)
10.00pm Have I Got News for You: The guests are Jeff Green and Brian Sewell (4768)
10.30pm Newsnight (1) (477263)
11.15pm The A-Force: Ray Diamond and Erol Brown introduce the black entertainment showcase (80053)

12.55pm VR 5 (1) (7833344)
1.45pm Quantum Leap (1) (3543039)
2.30pm Weather (3715902)

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HTV

6.00am GMTV (2918872)
9.25pm Supermarket Sweep (1428969)
9.55pm Regional News (7282211)
10.00pm The Time, the Place (25563)
10.30pm This Morning (1) (97754501)
12.20pm Regional News (9632292)
12.30pm News (1) and weather (5567414)

12.55pm The Fashion Police (1) (5542105) 1.25pm Home and Away (1) (7386878) 1.40pm Murdoch, She Wrote (4778563) 2.49pm Criminally Minded (1) (816553)
2.50pm WALKER: The Pulse (1) (4272501)
2.50pm Yan Can Cook: The Best of China (1) (4272501)

3.20pm News (1) (2717899)
3.25pm Regional News (7682740)
3.30pm World (2301958) 3.40pm Titch (3281105) 3.55pm Bernard's Watch (7971501) 4.15pm The Best of Hey Arnold! (3573853) 4.40pm Fun House (7340376)
5.10pm A Country Practice (5542105)
5.40pm News (1) and weather (785478)
6.00pm Home and Away (1) (705439)
6.25pm Regional Weather (807495)
6.30pm Regional News (1) (376)

7.00pm Bruce's Price Is Right (1) (3660)
7.30pm Coronation Street: Natalie uncovers the Street's best-kept secret and there is trouble for the Malletts at Katie's christening (1) (840)
8.00pm The Bill: Gabyeshing When a man is assaulted in a public toilet, Boyden and Quinn fear it may be more than a simple mugging (1) (2306)

8.30pm Blind Man Scream about a pair of rival salesmen who live next door to each other. With Jeremy Swift and Jesse Birdall (1) (4143)
9.00pm Most Wanted: Dermot Mulroney and Penny Smith appeal for public help in tracking down the killer of 12-year-old Thomas Marshall (1) (7327)
10.00pm News at Ten (1) (983834)
10.30pm Regional News (433921)
10.40pm Columbo: Uneasy Lies the Crown with Peter Falk and James Read. The dishevelled detective is called in to investigate when a popular actor is found murdered. The prime suspect is a cunning society dentist (1) (1) (83507327)

12.30pm The Paul Ross Show (3689728)
1.55pm Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (1966, b/w) with Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton and George Segal. Screen adaptation of Albee's play which won five Oscars (1966) (1966) 4.00pm Master of the House: An emotionally disturbed couple live out a fantasy that they have a son. Directed by Mike Nichols (1) (186728)
4.15pm Collins and Macdonald's Movie Club (1) (7223631)
4.40pm Coach (74444612)
5.00pm Coronation Street (1) (1) (20032)
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8.30pm Blind Man Scream about a pair of rival salesmen who live next door to each other. With Jeremy Swift and Jesse Birdall (1) (4143)
9.00pm Most Wanted: Dermot Mulroney and Penny Smith appeal for public help in tracking down the killer of 12-year-old Thomas Marshall (1) (7327)
10.00pm News at Ten (1) (983834)
10.30pm Regional News (433921)
10.40pm Columbo: Uneasy Lies the Crown with Peter Falk and James Read. The dishevelled detective is called in to investigate when a popular actor is found murdered. The prime suspect is a cunning society dentist (1) (1) (83507327)

12.30pm The Paul Ross Show (3689728)
1.55pm Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (1966, b/w) with Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton and George Segal. Screen adaptation of Albee's play which won five Oscars (1966) (1966) 4.00pm Master of the House: An emotionally disturbed couple live out a fantasy that they have a son. Directed by Mike Nichols (1) (186728)
4.15pm Collins and Macdonald's Movie Club (1) (7223631)
4.40pm Coach (74444612)
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CENTRAL

As HTV West except:
12.55-1.25 A Country Practice (5542105)
2.50-3.20 Our House (4272501)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (9536785)
6.25-7.00 Central News (185291)
10.40 Central Weekend Live (5683037)
12.15am Campus Cops (8355490)
12.40 The Paul Ross Show (3684235)
2.10 The LADS (1846070)
2.40 Box Office London (1194186)
3.05 Baywatch (8865902)
3.50 Heller Skelter (9061902)
4.40 Central Jobfinder '97 (1833148)
5.20 Asian Eye (4784709)

As HTV West except:
12.55-1.25 Shortland Street (5542105)
1.50 Perfectly Pies (9235835)
2.20-3.20 Highway to Heaven (1815747)
5.10-5.40 Home and Away (9536785)
6.00-7.00 Meridian Tonight (9536785)
10.30 Meridian News and Weather (457601)
10.45 Film: The Nightman (1991). A made-for-television erotic thriller starring Joanna Kerns, Jenny Robertson and Ted Marcoux. Directed by Charles Haid (2736476)

5.00am Freescreen (20032)
As HTV West except:
12.19pm Anglia Air Watch (9672327)
12.55-1.25 What's My Line? (5542105)
1.50 Backstage (9235835)
2.20-3.20 Highway to Heaven (1815747)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (9536785)
6.23 Anglia Weather (508124)
6.25-7.00 Anglia News (165281)
10.29 Anglia Air Watch (95495)
10.30 Anglia News and Weather (457601)
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1.50



CRICKET 48

Hollis at the helm as winter plans take shape

SPORT

FRIDAY DECEMBER 5 1997

RUGBY UNION 52

Healey on the wing as England ring changes for Twickenham



Romania, Colombia and Tunisia provide initial World Cup rivalry for Hoddle's team

England able to draw comfort

FROM OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT, IN MARSEILLES



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OUT of the darkness that shrouded the Stade Vélodrome, England were lit up by a dazzling shaft of light here last night. There may be no easy touches in the World Cup finals that will take place in France next summer, but when the draw was made for the tournament and England were allotted the third position in group G, a mixture of relief and elation spread over the face of Glenn Hoddle.

Just when it seemed that fate was going to deal England the cruellest of hands and place them in group F with Germany and the United States, old foes who have caused England heartbreak before, Hoddle's team were drawn instead in the group containing Romania — possibly the weakest of the eight seeds — Colombia and Tunisia. All have their merits, but England could have fared much, much worse.

Having avoided all the leading powers, teams such as Brazil, Germany, Spain and Argentina, Hoddle and his squad, buoyed by only two defeats in his 14 games in charge, can now tackle their preparations for France with renewed gusto, boosted by the optimism that will surge through them after the news of their opponents. If the England coach had feared a "group of death", this was news that breathed even more life into the nation's gathering challenge.

It means that England will open their attempt to try to win the sport's biggest prize for the first time in 32 years here in this Mediterranean port city on June 15. Probably

still operating from their projected base in La Baule, near Nantes, they will then move on to Toulouse a week later to play Romania before winding up their group games against Colombia in Lens, in the northeast of France, on June 26.

Romania, of course, will be the biggest threat and it is imperative that England win the group, because failure to do so is likely to pit them against Argentina in the last 16, a tie that they would prefer to avoid at that relatively advanced stage of the competition. To win the group would mean a marginally easier next tie, possibly against Croatia.

PAST RECORD

v Romania... P9 W2 D6 L1 F7 A5
OVERALL... P5 W1 D3 L1 F3 A3
v Colombia... P3 W2 D1 L0 F5 A1
OVERALL... P1 W0 D1 L0 F1 A1
No previous World Cup meetings
World Cup record includes qualifying ties

Romania, though, will constitute formidable opposition. They galloped through their qualifying group, winning nine of their ten matches and succumbing to a draw only once, against Ireland at Lansdowne Road in October. They reached the quarter-finals of the last World Cup in the United States, and with players such as Marius Lacatus and Dan Petrescu in their team, it will be a notable achievement if England can overcome them.

Colombia, too, will lack nothing for passion and commitment. Led by the unpredictable Newcastle United striker, Faustino Asprilla, there is likely to be more pressure on them than any other team given the tragically violent reaction to their elimination from the competition in the US when their defender, Andres Escobar, who had scored an own goal in the match against America, was gunned down when he returned to his home city of Medellin.

England's pairing with the South Americans, who last played against them in a draw at Wembley in the run-up to the 1996 European championship, means that the match between the teams that had been planned for London in February will almost certainly now be off. Argentina, who were alternative opponents, are also likely to be ruled out because of the possibility of that last 16 meeting. A possible replacement being mentioned last night was Yugoslavia.

As for Tunisia, they qualified over Egypt for the finals and are highly rated by the former England coach, Terry Venables. They lost to South Africa in the final of the African Nations Cup last year and under their Polish coach, Henryk Kasprczak, football in the North African country has been revitalised.

The last time that England faced them they won a tempestuous match 2-1. Steve Bull scored one of the goals, but the match is best remembered for the headbutt that Terry Butcher aimed at an opponent and the relief that it went undetected, thereby doing nothing to hamper England's last-minute preparations for the 1990 World Cup, when they eventually reached the semi-finals under Bobby Robson.



Sepp Blatter, the Fifa general secretary, gets the draw for the 1998 World Cup finals under way last night

The draw was held in the early evening here, an hour after dusk had fallen and obscured the blocks of modern flats and the rocky mountains rising away behind the stands. On a stage behind one of the goals that was decorated with props including a globe, a set of goalposts, a football and, almost as an afterthought, the World Cup trophy, Sepp Blatter, the Fifa president, had stepped into the spotlight like the compe of a game show.

The draw for the tournament, which affected more than 1.3 billion people from the 32 nations who have qualified for the extravaganza which will begin with Scotland's tie against Brazil in the Stade de France on June 10, looked like a cross between the

National Lottery Live and Family Fortunes, but it passed quickly and without a hitch. With the seeds drawn first and the Concaaf and African countries coming next, the tension for England supporters built and built until it was almost unbearable. In the end, though, they could have no complaints. It will still be tough and

with expectations growing with every game, to the extent that failure to make the semi-finals will now be regarded as a dreadful anticlimax, the group stage is still only the first stage of the second half of Hoddle's attempt to bring the World Cup back to England and create a new generation of heroes to follow the Boys of '66.

A happy Hoddle tries to keep cool

FROM MATT DICKINSON IN MARSEILLES

GLENN HODDLE did his best to maintain his usual unflappable exterior last night, but there was no mistaking the excitement or the relief, felt by the England coach after his team were drawn in group G.

While recognising Romania's vast World Cup experience, Hoddle knows victory over Colombia and Tunisia should be well within England's reach. "It could have been a lot harder," he said.

"Spain's group is a real tough one, but then again it could have been easier. I feel we are in the middle ground and we can go into it in a positive mood. We are well capable of qualifying but we need to do our homework."

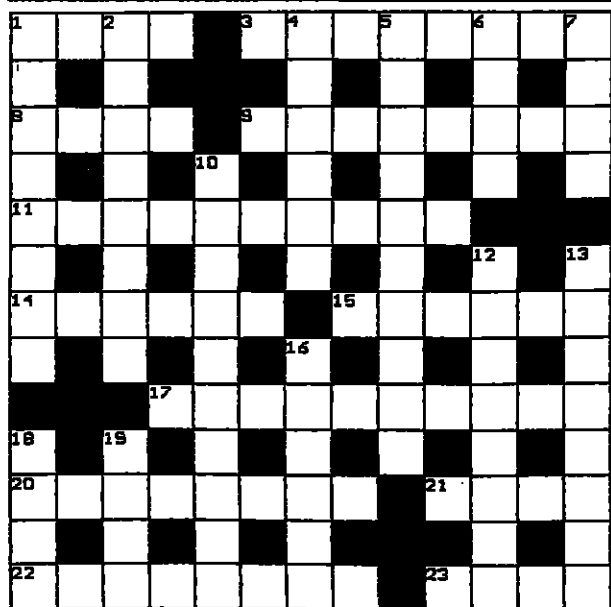
That will apply particularly to Tunisia who England have not played since 1990. Hoddle added: "We will have to start finding out about them straightaway. What they have for breakfast, I have seen them on television, but never in the flesh. We would have picked to play them first, certainly."

"Colombia are unpredictable. They can produce a massive performance one day, but then go out and not play so well the next. With Romania, they have plenty of World Cup experience, more than our squad. "I feel like I want to start tomorrow, I want to get my teeth into it. If you did not enjoy this, you should not be in the job in the first place."

England's first opponents will be Tunisia and Hoddle will pit his wits against Henryk Kasprczak, the African country's Polish coach who was part of the team that knocked England out of the World Cup in 1973. Kasprczak said: "England are very strong, but I played against them at Wembley when we knocked them out of the World Cup so anything is possible in football over 90 minutes. We have a lack of experience and tradition, but Tunisia was the first African country to win a World Cup game and we believe we can go through. England have changed their style and have come back stronger, but the weather when we play them in Marseille will suit us."

HOW THE TEAMS LINE UP			
GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D
Brazil	Italy	France	Spain
Scotland	Chile	South Africa	Nigeria
Morocco	Cameroun	Saudi Arabia	Paraguay
Norway	Austria	Denmark	Bulgaria
GROUP E	GROUP F	GROUP G	GROUP H
Holland	Germany	Romania	Argentina
Belgium	United States	Colombia	Japan
South Korea	Yugoslavia	Tunisia	Jamaica
Mexico	Iran	Croatia	

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1269

ACROSS

- 1 Vein of ore (4)
- 3 Sample (8)
- 8 Part of speech of speech (4)
- 9 Complaints, complaints (8)
- 11 Quibble (5,5)
- 14 Artist's whole production (6)
- 15 King's seat (6)
- 17 At once, if at all (3,2,5)
- 20 Breakdown for study (8)
- 21 Short hair, bird's pouch (4)
- 22 Game for one; one on movement (7, Night) (8)
- 23 Piquancy; lemon peel (4)

DOWN

- 1 Venture at poor odds (4,4)
- 2 Share rooms; have a big laugh (6,2)
- 4 Female-seclusion custom (6)
- 5 Understand; include (10)
- 6 Gangster's girl; — Flanders (6)
- 7 Bird's home (4)
- 10 Stock character (10)
- 12 Gradually come together (8)
- 13 Old, broken down (8)
- 16 Ecliptic belt (6)
- 18 (Eg wood) deform (4)
- 19 Run fast arrow (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1268

ACROSS: 1 Impala 5 Pounce 8 True 9 Crackers
10 Forced 12 Twin 15 Downing Street 16 Bolt 17 Absurd
19 Gambling 21 Flex 22 Impede 23 Treasty
DOWN: 2 Marco Polo 3 Ace 4 Accident 5 Peak 6 Make
terms 7 Cur 11 Constable 13 In earnest 14 Escargot
18 Mime 20 Arm 21 Pec

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Scotland are hoping to make it fourth time lucky against Brazil

By KEVIN MCCARRA

FEELINGS of exhilaration and foreboding prospered jointly but, above all, there was a sense that destiny had been at work in the draw yesterday. Although Scotland are to have the honour of opening the World Cup, on June 10 in the new Stade de France in Paris, they may end that day in a tattered condition. The match will be against the holders, Brazil.

When Sepp Blatter, the general secretary of Fifa, began to unscrew the ball from pot two that contained the name of the country to be placed with Brazil in group A, there were nine candidates. Any Scottish football supporter, however, knew that, in reality, there was only one nation that could possibly be announced. It was a matter of fate.

Craig Brown, the Scotland manager, had spent recent days stating that he did not want to face Brazil. So far as superstitious observers are concerned, that was tantamount to inviting such an outcome. In any case, the two countries are in the habit of encountering one another at the World Cup, with three previous meetings since 1974.

These are always festive occasions of uproarious good-

will for the supporters, but the merriment has been easier for the Brazilians to sustain. Scotland have won none of these fixtures, drawing 0-0 in 1974, losing 4-1 in 1982 and 1-0 in 1990.

"We are very happy," a dogged Brown said, "but it couldn't have been any harder. We have the chance to redeem ourselves against Brazil." The fascination at the prospect of another attempt at victory over such opponents tended to reduce interest in the rest of the draw. The other two opponents in the group, however, will also concern Brown.

Norway and Morocco may offer a contrast in styles, but both are liable to prove formidable. Indeed, the only defeat suffered by Brazil in their 44 matches since the 1994 World Cup Final was 4-2 against Norway, in Oslo. It is the measure of Norway's advance that such a result no longer provokes incredulity.

The coach, Egil Olsen, frequently finds himself accused of constructing a side that is prone to flinty, unattractive football, yet its players are in great demand. When the Scottish Football Association ponders the draw, the gloom may be relieved when they note some likely savings in

PAST RECORD

v Brazil... P8 W0 D2 L6 F2 A2
OVERALL... P3 W0 D1 L2 F1 A5
v Morocco...
No previous meetings
v Norway... P11 W7 D3 L1 F30 A14
OVERALL... P2 W1 D1 L0 F3 A2
World Cup record includes qualifying ties

expenses. Brown will not have far to travel when he seeks to study the Norway squad.

Its most significant members are all to be found in England, with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Henning Berg and Ronny Johnsen at Manchester United. A few more miles in the car and Brown will be able to observe Oyvind Leonhardsen at Liverpool. If Celtic, as expected, buy Harald Brattbak from Rosenborg Trondheim for £2 million next week, the manager will only incur the cost of a taxi fare across Glasgow for part of his research.

In qualifying for the finals, Norway won six and drew two of their eight matches against Hungary, Finland, Switzerland and Azerbaijan. They scored 21 goals and conceded two.

Morocco are one of the most respected of the African

nations and Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gabon, their rivals in the qualifying games, were never likely to prevent an appearance in the finals. Henri Michel, the veteran French manager, is in charge of Morocco and should provide them with an expertise that will be of assistance in his native land next summer.

"I feel we are capable of causing an upset against Norway and Morocco," Brown said, "although they are more highly rated than us in the Fifa rankings. I am always optimistic and we do have a team that is hard to beat." That durability will be tested on June 16, against Norway in Bordeaux, and on June 23, against Morocco in Saint-Etienne.

Scotland were in Saint-Etienne last month, when they lost 2-1 to France, and will now hope that the charm offensive carried out then has carried favour with the locals. Nonetheless, it is the opening fixture of the World Cup, against Brazil, that absorbs the mind.

Supporters hardly know whether to look forward to the sight of Ronaldo, scorer of two goals in the Rest of the World's 5-2 win over Europe in Marseille yesterday, or to dread the consequences for Scotland.



Talking horse - return of the Mighty Quinn

Plus... 1966 and all that - Geoff Hurst on World Cup glory

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